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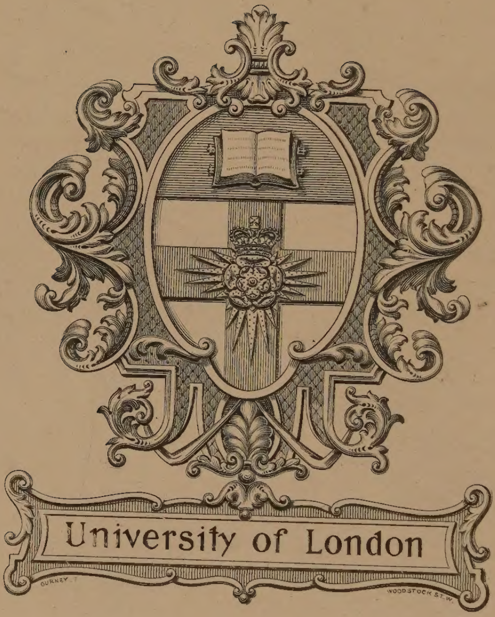

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

8 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CLXXXVI.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM FRIDAY, THIRTEENTH DAY OF MARCH, 1908, TO FRIDAY, TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH, 1908.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1908.

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Chronology of "The Parliamentary Debates."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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"To leave out all after the word 'that' and to insert the words 'This House, while ready to consider any practical proposal for dealing with the evil of unemployment, cannot entertain a measure which, by wasting the resources of the nation, would throw out of work more persons than it could assist and would destroy the power of organised labour, but hopes that the Government will give immediate consideration to the recommendations in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Commission so far as they deal with unemployment."—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

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Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House divided :—Ayes, 241; Noes, 95. (Division List No. 41.)

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House, while ready to consider any practical proposal for dealing with the evil of unemployment, cannot entertain a measure which, by wasting the resources of the nation, would throw out of work more persons than it could assist and would destroy the power of organised labour, but hopes that the Government will give immediate consideration to the recommendations in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Commission so far as they deal with unemployment.

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Swinton and Mexbrough Gas Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 100

Hours of Labour Bill.—Order for Second Reading upon Friday, 1st May, read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 100

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways [H.L.].

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—Cambrian Railways—(Petition for Bill).
The same were ordered to lie on the Table 101

STANDING ORDERS not complied with in respect of the Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed, provided that a clause be inserted in the Bill to the following effect, viz:—That no sale of the amalgamated undertaking shall take place without the consent of the Memorialists, Charles William Bartholomew, Richard Donald Bayn, and William Howard Gray, which does not provide for the payment to the said Memorialists of the sum of at least £5,000 in cash in respect of the debenture stock mentioned in Section 4 of the Act of 1901, or in respect of the stock of the new Company incorporated by the Bill to be exchanged therefore under the provisions of the said Bill.

Read, and agreed to 101

Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 101

Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill.—Read 2^{a}, and committed for Wednesday next 101

Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [H.L.]—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons 102

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Agricultural Statistics, 1907, Vol. XLII., Part II).—Returns of produce of crops in Great Britain 102

Emigration.—Report on the Emigrants' Information Office 102

Board of Education.—Board of Education—(Education Bill, 1908)—Print of the enactments proposed to be amended or repealed in the schedules to the Bill. (Welsh Department)--Regulations and conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education under Section 48 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, of Elementary Schools in Wales and Monmouthshire 102

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Education (Scotland).—Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, amending the terms of Paragraph 2 of the Minute of 27th April, 1899 102

Charity Commission.—Fifty-fifth Report of the Charity Commissioners ... 102

Emigration Statistics (Ireland).—Report and tables 102

Factory and Workshop (Supplement to Annual Report of Chief Inspector for 1906).—Returns of persons employed in 1904, in non-textile factories, and summary of annual reports of Medical Officers of Health for 1906.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 102

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.—Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908 103

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Orders in Council approving memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty ... 103

Spring Assizes Act, 1879—Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908 103

Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act, 1907.—Act of Sederunt, regulating the fees payable in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland 103

Polling Districts (County of Essex).—Order made by the council of the county of Essex altering certain polling districts in the Mid or Chelmsford Parliamentary Division 103

Shop Hours Act, 1904 (West Riding of Yorkshire).—Order made by the council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, for certain classes of shops within the Sowerby Bridge Urban District 103

Superannuation.—Treasury Minute, dated 15th March, 1908, granting a retired allowance to James Ranyard Lee, First Class Attendant, British Museum.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 103

Official Secrets Bill [H.L.].

The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 103

Moved "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Bill read 1ª, and to be printed [No. 28].

Municipal Representation Bill [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Lord Eversley 103

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 10, to leave out the words 'any borough' and to insert the words 'any metropolitan borough.'"—(*Lord Eversley.*)

Lord Courtney of Penwith 106
Lord Ashbourne 106
Lord Belper 107
Lord Avebury 107
Lord Allendale 107

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord Courtney of Penwith 108

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 21, to leave out from the word 'voting' to the end of the subsection, and to insert the words 'and after any such further resolution this Act shall remain in force without any limitation of time.'"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

Lord Belper 108

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 21, after Subsection (7) to insert the following new Subsection: (8) When this Act ceases to be in force in any borough, one-third of the councillors of which would, but for the adoption of this Act, have retired every year, the particular councillors to retire on the two ordinary days of election next after this Act ceases to be in force shall be determined by lot, in such manner as the mayor may prescribe.""—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3:

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, lines 25 and 26, to leave out the words 'expiration of six months from the passing of the Resolution,' and to insert the words "adoption of of this Act.'"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 4."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to, and Bill reported, with Amendments, to the House.

Re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. [No. 29.]

SMALL HOLDINGS.

The Earl of Onslow 109
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 110
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The Earl of Dartmouth 112
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LADY CATHCART AND HER TENANTS.

The Earl of Camperdown 119
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THE ARMY.—Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of Viscount Midleton that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty for any Minute of the Army Council approving the further reduction in the numbers of the Regular Artillery, and the Report for 1907 of the late Inspector-General of the Forces so far as it affects "the training and its efficiency of the troops under the control of the Home Government, and the readiness and fitness of the Army for war."

Lord Lucas 121
Lord Wynford 127
Lord Raglan 130
Lord Lovat 134
Lord Harris 137
The Marquess of Lansdowne 139
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Elgin*) 147
Viscount Midleton 102

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

House adjourned at Eight o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.—New Writ for the Borough of Camberwell (Peckham Division), in the room of Charles Goddard Clarke, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*) 156

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—Herne Bay Pier Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 156

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 156

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make further provision with respect to the discharge of compensation waters from the water undertaking of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the County Borough of Huddersfield, [Huddersfield Water Bill [Lords]]. 156

Huddersfield Water Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 156

PETITIONS.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 156

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 156

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 157

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 157

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Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 157

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Charity Commission (England and Wales) Bill.—Fifty-fifth Report of the Charity Commissioners; to lie upon the Table 157

Factories and Workshops.—Supplement to the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops; to lie upon the Table 157

Polling Districts (County of Essex).—Order made by the Council of the County of Essex; to lie upon the Table 157

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, for certain classes of Shops within the Sowerby Bridge Urban District; to lie upon the Table 158

Emigration Statistics (Ireland).—To lie upon the Table 158

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Enactments proposed to be amended or repealed in the Schedules to the Bill; to lie upon the Table 158

Spring Assizes Act, 1879.—Two Orders in Council of 29th February, 1908, constituting Spring Assize Counties; to lie upon the Table 158

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.—Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908: (1) applying the provisions of Section 238 of the Act to Deserters from Roumanian vessels; and (2) revoking the Order of the 2nd November, 1907, relating to the same subject; to lie upon the Table 158

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Orders in Council of 29th February, 1908, approving Memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; to lie upon the Table 159

Emigration.—Report on the Emigrants' Information Office; to lie upon the Table 159

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Agricultural Statistics, 1907, Vol. XLII., Part II.; to lie upon the Table 159

Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act, 1907.—Act of Sederunt regulating the Fees payable in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland; to lie upon the Table 159

Superannuation Act, 1887.—Treasury Minute, dated 15th March, 1908, granting to James Ranyard Lee, First-Class Attendant, British Museum, allowance under the Act; to lie upon the Table 159

Paper Laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Local Loans Fund.—Accounts of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in respect of the Capital and Income of the Local Loans Fund; to be printed. [No. 48] 160

Island of Vatersay.—Return ordered, "of the Correspondence between Lady Gordon Cathcart and the Secretary for Scotland and the Lord-Advocate, with reference to the Seizure and Occupation of the Island of Vatersay by Squatters; and with regard to proposed future arrangements in that Island."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 21] 160

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NEW BILL.

Calendar Reform Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 24th March, and to be printed. [Bill 155] 210

SUPPLY [3RD ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £21,805,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909.

Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon) 214

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item Class II., Vote 11 (Board of Education and Fisheries), be reduced by £1,000."—(*Mr. Chaplin*).

Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 223
Mr. J. A. Pease (Essex, Saffron Walden)... 229
Mr. Courtney Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) 236
Colonel Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 238
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Mr. Abel Smith (Hertfordshire, Hertford) 243
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Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 246
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Mr. Power (Waterford, E.) 266
Mr. J. A. Pease 267
Mr. Bridgeman (Shropshire, Oswestry) 269
Mr. Courtney Warner 270
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 270

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 87; Noes, 207. (Division List No. 42.)

Original Question again proposed.

Sir Berkeley Sheffield (Lincolnshire, Brigg) 273

Motion made, and Question proposed "That Item Class II., Vote 11 (Board of Agriculture and Fisheries) be reduced by £100."—(*Sir Berkeley Sheffield.*)

The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 278
Mr. Chaplin 279
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Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 287
Mr. Harcourt 288
Sir F. Banbury 290
Mr. Bridgeman 294
Mr. T. L. Corbett 295

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 47 ; Noes, 167. (Division List No. 43.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 299

Motion made, and Question proposed—"That Item Revenue Departments, Vote 3, be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. Samuel Roberts.*)

Mr. Stanley Wilson (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) 302
The Postmaster-General (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) ... 304
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Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 316
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Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 320

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 63 ; Noes, 206. (Division List, No. 44.)

The Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow ; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 325

Leigh Burgh Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed; The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 325

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered (according to order), and agreed to ... 325

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Board of Education.—Public Elementary Schools in "single school parishes" as defined in Section 3 (6) of the Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill, 1908. 325

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India (Land Revenue).—Land revenue assessments in the Punjab since 1855.
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 325

County Courts.—Rules, 1908; Memorandum respecting 325

Workmen's Compensation.—Rules, 1908, with Memorandum 325

Local Loans Fund (Accounts, 1906-1907).—Accounts of receipts and payments by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt.
Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 325

Isle of Vatersay.—Return of correspondence.
Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of 6th February last), and to be printed. [No. 30] 326

Sunday Closing (Shops) Bill [H.L.] [SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.
Lord Avebury 326
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Avebury.*)
Lord Swaythling 329
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 332
The Marquess of Lansdowne 335
Earl Beauchamp 337
The Duke of Northumberland 340
Lord Avebury 341
On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday, the 26th instant.

Agricultural Holdings Bill [H.L.] [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 342
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Carrington*)
The Earl of Onslow 343
On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [H.L.] [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.
Earl Carrington 344
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)
Lord Belper 344
On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

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House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock till To morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 17TH MARCH, 1908.

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Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, 4th May, and to be printed. [Bill 159] ... 418

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee :—

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, the sum of £375,817 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

2. Resolved, "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, the sum of £44,355,400 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow ... 419

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The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) ... 452
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Resolution agreed to.

Fifth Resolution—£327, Treasury Chest Bond—considered.

Sir F. Banbury ... 456
Mr. Runciman ... 457

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [11TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.
Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

CLASS III.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for Criminal Prosecutions and other Law Charges in Ireland."

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Mr. T. L. Corbett ... 463

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£2,500,' and insert '£2,400.'—(*Captain Craig.*)—instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That '£2,500' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. Tomkinson (Cheshire, Crewe) ... 464
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) ... 466
The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange) ... 468
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 472
Mr. Stanley Wilson ... 477
Mr. Birrell ... 478
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) ... 481
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) ... 482
Sir F. Banbury ... 484

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 216; Noes, 49. (Division List No. 45.)

Resolution agreed to.

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London Electric Supply Bill [Lords].—Motion made and Question "That the Lords Message [5th March], 'That it is desirable that the London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords], the London Electric Supply Bill [Lords], and the London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords] be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament,' be now considered" (by Order).—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means*)—put and agreed to.

The President of the Board of Trade (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 489

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Resolution."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*)—put, and agreed to.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. Morton (*Sutherland*) 491

Question, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes after Eight o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill (Petition for additional Provision); Bristol Docks Bill [H.L.]; Ards and Bangor Railways Bill; London United Tramways Bill; Cambrian Railways Bill (Petition for Bill)—Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next 493

Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.]; Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 493

Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill.—Reported, without Amendments 493

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester and Midland Junction Railway, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway, and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^a, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 493

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.]—Message from the Commons that they disagree with this House in the Resolution communicated to them on the 5th instant, viz.:—"That it is desirable that the said Bills be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament" 493

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Colonies.—The Proceedings of 11th August, 1905, relating to a presentation of a Return of the cost of the several Colonies, Protectorates, and Dependences of the British Empire at the expense of the British Exchequer for each of the years from 1853 to 1903, in the same form, as nearly as may be, as the information supplied in the House of Commons Paper, No. 417, of Session 1881; and also their population, and the annual value of their trade with the United Kingdom, so far as it can be given, for the latest year for which figures are available. Ordered to be vacated.

Papers relating to the machinery and cost of elections in certain British Colonies 493

Checkweighing at Lime and Cement Works, etc.—Reports by the Departmental Committees on Checkweighing 494

Trade Reports, Annual Series.—No. 3962, Servia; No. 3963, Hungary. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 494

Criminal Appeals.—Rules made by the Lord Chief Justice and the Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal... 494

Transvaal Government Guaranteed Loan.—Treasury Minute. Laid before House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 494

NEW BILLS.

Thrift and Credit Banks Bill [H.L.].—Read 1ª, to be printed [No. 31.] ... 494

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill. [H.L.].—Read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday, the 30th instant. [No. 32,] ... 495

Official Directory of Nurses Bill [H.L.].—Read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday, 2nd April next. [No. 33] 495

THE NAVY.

Earl Cawdor 495

Moved, "That there be laid before the House further Papers relating to the Navy Estimates."—(*Earl Cawdor.*)

Lord Ellenborough 511
The Earl of Hardwicke 519
Lord Lamington 519
Lord Inverclyde 521
The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord Tweedmouth) 522
Earl Cawdor 540

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—Moved, that a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill.

Agreed to.

The Lords following were named of the Committee.

L. Saltoun.
L. Stanley of Alderley
L. Lawrence.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Haversham.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman: Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to aquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint the Five Members of that House to be joined with the said Committee pursuant to the Resolution of this House of the 5th instant, and to the Message of the House of Commons of Thursday last signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution ... 543

House adjourned at a quarter before eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Camborne Water Bill. Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 543

Derby Gas Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 544

Private Bills (Group C).—Mr. WHITBREAD reported from the Committee on Group C of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at Twelve of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 544

Private Bills (Group A).—Ordered, That the said Dr. William Williams and the said Isaac Davies do attend the Committee on Group A of Private Bills To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock... 544

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Report [17th March] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill to be read a second time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means*) ... 544

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS —That they have agreed to: Amendments to Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords], without Amendment 544

PETITIONS.

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill and Licensing Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 545

Licensing Bill.—4 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 545

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table 545

Licensing Bill.—7 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 545

Swaziland.—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 545

Unemployed Workmen Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 545

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Checkweighing at Lime and Cement Works, etc., (Departmental Committees).—Reports by the Departmental Committees on Checkweighing; to lie upon the Table 545

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3962 and 3963; to lie upon the Table 545

Transvaal Government Guaranteed Loan.—Treasury Minute; to lie upon the Table 545

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Criminal Appeal Rules 546

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Promotion in the Civil Service 546

Erection of New School at Caddy Randalstown 546

Distribution of Untenanted Land on the Lambert Minors Estates 547

Australian and New Zealand State Railways 547

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Registration of Workmen's Clubs 548
English Licence Duties on Irish Motors 548
Pacific Cable—Increase of Grants-in-Aid 549
Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Act 549
Foreign Trawlers in the Moray Firth 550
School Grants 550
School Grants—Children under Five Years of Age 551
The Duke of York's School... 552
British and Foreign Naval Expenditure on New Construction 552
Hollesley Bay Labour Colony Accounts 553
Imports of Plain Potato Spirit 555
Sale of the Duke of York's School 555
Issue of New Short Rifle to the Yeomanry 556

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

H.M.S. "Indus" 556
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Discharge of Tuberculous Soldiers 556
Enfield Factory Apprentices 557
Lord Roberts and the Territorial Army 557
Militia Adjutants 559
Militia Battalion Colours 559
The Sale of the "Coach and Horses" 559
Transvaal Garrison 560
Territorial Force—Attestation Form 561
Wales and the Territorial Army 561
Volunteer Long Service Medal 562
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Whipping Act in India 566
In Decentralisation 566
Meherpur Disturbances 566
Mymensingh Disturbances Report 567
Excise Duties on Jamaica Manufactures 568
Property Tax in Jamaica 568
Depression in the Diamond Trade 569
Labour for Southern Rhodesia 569
Indians at Vancouver 569
The Excavations of Memphis 570
Brereton Colliery Disaster 570
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Brussels Carpets 572
Cheltenham Post Office Cycle Cleaner 573
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Irish Intermediate Schools 578
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Tralee Cattle Drive 589
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Waterford Assizes—Case of Nicholas Quinlan 590
London and North Western Railway and Kingston Harbour Lines 590
Small Land Holders (Scotland) Bill 591
Business of the House 591

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES), ETC.—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Timothy Davies and Mr. Walker; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Benn and Mr. Acland.

Report to lie upon the Table 592

Polling Districts and Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill.—Reported with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 92.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 92.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 160] 592

Polling Districts (County Councils) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 93.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 93.] 592

Bill to be taken into consideration upon Monday next.

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NEW BILLS.

Irish National Schools (Heating) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 161] 593

Trust Investment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 162] 593

Pharmacy Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 163] 594

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).—Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion when the Business is postponed this day, be resumed and proceeded with, though opposed, after the interruption of the Business."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided: Ayes, 302; Noes, 75. (Division List No. 46) ... 594

SUPPLY [16TH MARCH] REPORT.

Resolution reported:

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.
(VOTE ON ACCOUNT.)

"That a sum, not exceeding £21,805,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909.

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) 601
Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.) 617

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£21,805,000,' and insert '£21,804,900'"—(*Mr. Dillon*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed—"That '£21,805,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 624
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) 629
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 637
Mr. Annan Bryce (Inverness Burghs) 640
Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.) 640
Mr. Gooch (Bath) 646
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 648
Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.) 650
Mr. Carlisle (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 652
Mr. Conor O'Kelly (Mayo, N.) 653
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 654

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 656
The Postmaster-General (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) ... 661
Mr. Guinness (Bury St. Edmunds) 664
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 665

Resolution agreed to.

EIGHT HOURS WORKING DAY.

Mr. Clynes (Manchester, N.E.) 666
Mr. Kelly (Manchester, S.W.) 675

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, time has arived when, in the interests of the workers generally, and in view of the present large number of unemployed, the working day in all trades and industries should be limited by law to a maximum of eight hours."—*Mr. Clynes.*)

Mr. Mond (Chester) 681
Mr. W. H. Lever (Cheshire, Wirral) 684
Mr. Macpherson (Preston) 687
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 689
Mr. Nicholls (Northamptonshire, N.) 692
Mr. H. J. Wilson (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth) 693
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 694
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 702
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) 705
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 707
Mr. Lupton (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 707

And it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

SUPPLY [20TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, REVENUE 1907–8 DEPARTMENTS.

1. "That a supplementary sum, not exceeding £260,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Post Office, including Telegraphs."

CLASS III.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Royal Irish Constabulary."

CLASS IV.

3. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £6,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Board of Education, including a Grant in Aid of the Imperial College of Science and Technology."

First Resolution read a second time

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Claude Hay 709
Sir F. Banbury 709
Mr. T. L. Corbett 711
Mr. Sydney Buxton... 712

Question put, and agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 713
Mr. Birrell... 714

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Sir F. Banbury 715
Mr. Claude Hay 716

Question put, and agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Sir William Anson (*Oxford University*) 717
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (*Mr. Lough, Islington, W.*)... 719
Sir Henry Craik (*Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities*) 733
Mr. Lane Fox (*Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash*) 724
Mr. Claude Hay 724
Mr. Carlile 725
Sir F. Banbury 726
Mr. Bridgeman (*Shropshire, Oswestry*) 727
Mr. William Rutherford (*Liverpool, West Derby*)... 727

Mr. LOUGH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided :—Ayes, 161 ; Noes, 23. (Division List, No. 47.)

Question put accordingly, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

The House divided :—Ayes, 161 ; Noes, 22. (Division List, No. 48.)

SUPPLY [10th March] REPORT.

Resolutions reported :

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £7,129,700, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expenses of Wages, etc., to Officers, Seamen and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,306,700, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants-in-Aid, and other Charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."

First Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed this day.

Second Resolution to be considered to-morrow 731

WAYS AND MEANS [17th March] REPORT.

Resolutions reported :

1. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1908, the sum of £375,817, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

2. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909, the sum of £44,355,400, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

First Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Runciman.

Second Resolution to be considered this day... 732

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council District Gas Bill [H.L.].—Petition for additional provision read, and referred to the Examiners ... 733

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.].—Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Saye and Sele and the Lord Wenlock be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee in the place of the Viscount Iveagh and the Lord Clinton, and that the Lord Wenlock be Chairman of the said Committee; read and agreed to 733

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Reported with Amendments 733

Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L]—Reported, with Amendments 733

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 733

Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—Leave given to the Select Committee to adjourn over to-morrow and not to sit on Monday next until half-past Two o'clock 733

PETITION.

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 733

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Education (Scotland).—Return showing the expenditure from the grant for public education in Scotland in the year 1907, with statistics 733

Loan Fund Board of Ireland.—Seventieth Annual Report, 1907. Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table 734

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—A message ordered to be sent to the Commons to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A. on Tuesday next at Three o'clock 734

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

The Duke of Bedford 734
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Portsmouth*)... ... 737
Lord Abinger 740
The Earl of Albemarle 740
The Earl of Erroll 744
Lord Wenlock 744
Lord Saye and Sele... 745

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The Marquess of Lansdowne 746
The Earl of Portsmouth 747
Lord Harris 748

THE TERRITORIAL BATTERIES.

Lord Wenlock 750
The Earl of Portsmouth 750

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock till To-morrow, half-past ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 750

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; an Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time 750

Dublin Corporation Bill (BY ORDER).—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 750

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 750

London United Tramways Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 751

Dublin and South Eastern Railway Bill; City of Glasgow Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 751

Seaham Harbour Dock Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table 751

Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 751

PETITIONS.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 751

Congo Free State.—Petition for protection of the native races; to lie upon the Table 751

Licensed Premises Exclusion of Children.—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 751

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 751

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 751

Moray Firth (Illegal Trawling).—Petition for prevention; to lie upon the Table 751

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 752

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Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 752

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Elections (Colonies).—Papers relating to the Machinery and Cost of Elections in certain British Colonies; to lie upon the Table 752

Education (Scotland).—Return showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland; to lie upon the Table 752

Loan Fund Board (Ireland).—Seventieth Annual Report, 1907; to lie upon the Table 752

Foreign Trade and Commerce.—Return ordered, "of Accounts relating to the Trade and Commerce of certain Foreign Countries and British Possessions."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*) 752

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

North of Scotland Mail Service 752
Heybridge Letter Deliveries 753
London Educational Endowments 753
Refrigerating Machinery on Battleships 754
Use of Firearms in Ireland 755
Hertfordshire Schools 756
Blacker-Douglas Estate 756
North Kerry Evicted Farms 757
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Metropolitan Police Stations 777
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Hertfordshire Higher Education Rate 779
Hertfordshire Secondary Schools and Training Colleges 780
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The Budget 795

Business of the House 795

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Secretary Gladstone, and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. McKenna, Mr. Lough, and Sir Edward Strachey.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A. the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. Carlile, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Butcher, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Arkwright, Sir Francis Lowe, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Benn, Mr. Yoxall, Mr. Adkins, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. Montagu, Mr. John William Taylor, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Nicholls.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A. the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill: Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Summerbell, Mr. Charles Duncan, Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. Scott, Mr. Esslemont, Mr. Watt, Mr. Guinness, Sir Frederick Banbury, Sir Gilbert Parker, Mr. Du Cros, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. Strauss, and Mr. Clement Edwards.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added the following Member to Standing Committee B. : Mr. Charles Craig.

Reports to lie upon the Table. 796

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords]; That they have appointed a Committee consisting of Five Lords to join with a Committee of this House to consider the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill, and they request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

That they propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A, on Tuesday next, at Three of the Clock 796

NEW BILLS.

Buxton Charities Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 164] 797

Long Ashton Charity Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 165] 797

Abbots Bromley Charity Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 166] 798

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided: Ayes, 273; Noes 73. (Division List No. 49) ... 798

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SUPPLY [10TH MARCH] REPORT (4TH ALLOTTED DAY).

Second Resolution—Navy Estimates, 1909. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,306,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants-in-Aid, and other Charges connected therewith which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909"—read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Bellairs (*Lynn Regis*) ... 801
Mr. Mackarness (*Berkshire, Newbury*) ... 808
Mr. W. Pearce (*Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*) ... 809
Mr. Napier (*Kent, Faversham*) ... 809
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestshire E.*) ... 810
The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (*Mr. Lambert, Devonshire, South Molton*) 814
Mr. Arthur Lee (*Hampshire, Fareham*) ... 817
Mr. Lupton (*Lincolnshire, Sleaford*) ... 818
Mr. Munro Ferguson (*Leith Burghs*) ... 825
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) ... 825
Mr. Lambert ... 827

Question put, agreed to.

SUPPLY [11TH MARCH] REPORT.

Resolution reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

"That a number Land Forces, not exceeding 185,000 all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. Luttrell (*Devonshire, Tavistock*) ... 828
Mr. Hart-Davies (*Hackney N.*) ... 830

Amendment proposed.

"To leave out '185,000,' and insert '175,000,'—(*Mr. Luttrell*) instead of."

Question proposed, "That '185,000,' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. Arthur Lee ... 831
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Haldane, Haddington*) ... 837
Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) ... 855
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) ... 861
Mr. Wedgewood (*Newcastle-under Lyme*) ... 864
Mr. Ashley (*Lancashire, Blackpool*) ... 867
Sir. H. Cotton (*Nottingham, E.*) ... 873
Mr. Rees (*Montgomery Boroughs*) ... 877
Mr. J. M. Robertson (*Northumberland, Tyneside*) ... 881
Captain Craig (*Down, E.*) ... 886
Mr. Everett (*Suffolk, Woodbridge*) ... 892
Mr. Wyndham (*Dover*) ... 893
Mr. Harold Cox (*Preston*) ... 903

Amendment put, and negatived.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [12TH MARCH].

Resolutions reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £9,422,000, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expense of the Pay, etc., of His Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) 908
Mr. Haldane 909
Sir F. Banbury 910
Sir H. Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 911
Captain Craig 912

Question put, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution, and agreed to."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,743,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Rewards; Half-Pay; Retired Pay; Widows' Pensions; and other Non-Effective Charges for Officers, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."
3. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,782,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals; of Out Pensions; Rewards for Distinguished Services; Widows' Pensions; and other Non-Effective Charges for Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."
4. "That a sum, not exceeding £167,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Civil Superannuation, Compensation, Compassionate Allowances and Gratuities, and of Payments under the Workmen's Compensation Act, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909"

Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [9TH MARCH].

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

"That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, including 18,463 Royal Marines."

Resolution agreed to.

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Secretary Haldane, Mr. Edmund Robertson, and Mr. Buchanan, do prepare and bring it in.

Army (Annual) Bills.—"To provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army, presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 167.]

SUPPLY [10TH MARCH] REPORT.
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum not exceeding £7,129,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Wages, etc., to Officers, Seamen, and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. Barnes (Glasgow, Blackfriars) 914
Mr. Edmund Robertson 914
Sir. F. Banbury 914
Mr. Edmund Robertson 915
Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 915

Question put, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [17TH MARCH] REPORT.

Second Resolution considered, and agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to bring in a Bill upon the Resolution reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 18th day of this instant March, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—"To apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and eight and one thousand nine hundred and nine," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next 916

DEBTORS (IMPRISONMENT).

Ordered, that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the existing Law relating to the Imprisonment of Debtors, and to report whether any Amendments are desirable.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Stopford Brooke, Mr. Byles, Mr. Charles Craig, Mr. Delany, Mr. Robert Duncan, Mr. Ferens, Mr. George Gibbs, Mr. Hodge, Mr. Keswick, Sir Charles M'Laren, Mr. John Philips, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Rendall, Mr. Wadsworth and Mr. Wills.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and Records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 916

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stockport Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 917

Lincoln Corporation Bill.—Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 917

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 917

PETITIONS.

Building Feus and Leases, Scotland.—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 917

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Children Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table... 917

Children Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 917

Dairies (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 917

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 918

Licensing Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 918

Lights on Vehicles (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 918

Moray Firth (Illegal Trawling).—2 Petitions for prevention; to lie upon the Table 918

Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 918

Rights of Way (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 918

Sale of Food and Drugs Acts (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table... 918

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Congestion in Ireland (Royal Commission).—Tenth Report of the Commissioners; to lie upon the Table 918

Medical Council.—Accounts for 1907; to lie upon the Table 918

Metropolitan Cattle Market.—Accounts presented for the year 1907; to lie upon the Table 918

Irish Land Purchase Finance (Departmental Committee).—Report of the Departmental Committee; to lie upon the Table 919

Wines Imported.—Return presented relative; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 94] 919

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Prosecutions for Illegal Trawling 919

Cost of Salving the "Montagu" 919

Strengthening the Coastguard Service 920

Religious Instruction in London County Council Training Colleges 920

Dismissal of Married School Teachers at Aberdare 921

Constitution of the Irish Department of Agriculture 921

The Brussels International Conference 922

Companies Consolidation Bill 922

Additional Grants to Scottish County Education Committees 922

The Tugs "Grappler" and "Robust" 923

Applications for Orders under the Public Health Act, 1907 923

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Pay of Writers in the Naval Ordnance Department ... 924

Medical Attendance for West Ham Workhouse Officials ... 924

Efficiency of the Portarlington Schools ... 925

Irish National Schools Inspection ... 925

Irish Schools Inspections—Confidential Reports ... 926

Sale of the Rockfield Estate, Co. Mayo ... 927

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Seaverns; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill: Mr. Yoxall.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill): Mr. Secretary Gladstone and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill): Mr. Burns and Dr. Macnamara.

Reports to lie upon the Table ... 927

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Hogan (Tipperary, N.) ... 928

Mr. Clancy (Dublin County, N.) ... 929

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 937

Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St Albans) ... 942

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Lonsdale (Armagh, Mid.) ... 946

Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.) ... 954

Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) ... 956

Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green) ... 961

Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) ... 966

Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.) ... 970

Mr. Mackarness (Berkshire, Newbury) ... 971

Mr. Gwynn (Galway) ... 972

Mr. Guinness (Bury St. Edmunds) ... 973

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) ... 975

Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) ... 983

Mr. James Campbell (Dublin University) ... 986

Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) ... 987

Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) ... 988

Question "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Breaches of Bye-Laws Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) ... 989

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Captain Craig (*Down, E.*) 989

And it being Five of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday next.

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [LORDS].—Ordered, That the Lords Message [19th March] relative to the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords] be now considered.

Lords' Message considered accordingly—

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Five Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of 19th March, to consider the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords].

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Godfrey Baring, Mr. Idris, Mr. Vincent Kennedy, and Sir John Batty Tuke.

Ordered that the Committee have powər to send for persons, papers and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.

Ordered, That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords Committee as proposed by their Lordships.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith 991

LOTTERIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS.—Resolved, That is is expedient that a Select Committee of five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and inquire into the Law (1) as to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures, and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what Amendments if any, in the Law are necessary or desirable.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith 992

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at two minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—
Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) [H.L.]
The same was ordered to lie on the Table 993

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]—Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.] Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit again till Wednesday next 993

Madras Railway Company (Annuities Bill).—Read 3ª, and passed ... 993

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.]—Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.] Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 993

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PETITION.

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 993

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Tropical Diseases Research Fund.—Report of the Advisory Committee ... 993

Trade Reports: Annual Series.—No. 3964. Netherlands (Amsterdam) ... 993

Congestion in Ireland.—Tenth Report of the Commissioners 993

Irish Land Purchase Finance.—Report of the Departmental Committee ... 994

Post Office.—Agreement for an exchange of money orders between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the German Empire.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 994

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.—Account of moneys received and paid by the Chamberlain of the City of London 994

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.—Return of receipts and expenditure of the General Medical Council.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 994

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.]: Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have appointed a Committee of Five Members to join with the Committee appointed by this House, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of Thursday last, to consider the Bill, and they have ordered that their Committee do meet the Lords' Committee in Committee Room A. to-morrow at Three o'clock, as proposed by this House 949

LOTTERIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS.—Message from the Commons that they have come to the following Resolution to which they desire the concurrence of this House, viz., that it is expedient that a Select Committee of Five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of an equal number of Lords to consider and inquire into the law: (1) As to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) As to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what Amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable 994

NEW BILL.

Land and Property Transfer Bill [H.L.]: Presented by the Lord Wemyss (*E. Wemyss*); read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 34) 995

EX-SOLDIERS AND CIVIL PENSION.

Lord Denman 995
The Earl of Erroll 1000
The Earl of Donoughmore 1004

BUILDING GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS.

Lord Barnard 1005

Moved, "That there be laid before the House, Papers with regard to the allocation of the £100,000, voted by Parliament last session for building new schools, and with regard to other matters connected with recent educational administration."—(*The Lord Barnard.*)

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The Earl of Dartmouth 1023
Earl Cawdor 1025
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1028
The Marquess of Londonderry 1042
The Lord Bishop of St. David's 1015

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH—Huddersfield Water Bill [Lords] Great Western (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1046

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill; Derby Gas Bill; Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1047

Camborne Water Bill; Herne Bay Pier Bill [Lords]; Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 1047

Bromley and Crays Gas Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1047

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 1047

Licensing Bill.—5 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1047

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) Scotland Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1047

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1047

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Foreign Trade and Commerce.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 95] 1047

Trade Reports (Annual Series)—Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3964 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1048

POSTAL AGREEMENT (GERMANY).—Postal Agreement for an exchange of Money Orders between the Post Office of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the German Empire, to lie upon the Table 1048

INVERNESS COUNTY COUNCIL AND ALLOTMENTS.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 96.] 1048

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Belgian Imports and Exports 1048
Position of New Post Office at Saltcoats 1049
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Deportations of Indians at Vancouver ... 1050
Construction of Railway from Chiromo to Blantyre ... 1050
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NEW BILLS.

Borough Councils Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 168]... 1100

Public Houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 169] ... 1103

Employment of British Subjects Abroad Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 170] 1103

Weekly Rest-day Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 2nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 171]... 1103

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Order for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) 1104
The Under-Secretary of State (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.) ... 1117
Mr. Bonar Law (Camberwell, Dulwich) 1126
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1133
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1137
Colonel Seely (Liverpool, Abercromby) 1144
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.) 1148
Mr. John Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) 1150
Mr. Mackarness (Berkshire, Newbury) 1152
Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1153
Mr. Mond (Chester) 1157
Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 1158
Mr. A. Dewar (Edinburgh, S.) 1160
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1163
Mr. Churchill 1165
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 1167
Mr. Harwood (Bolton) 1169
Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 1171
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 1173

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow.

Army Annual Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow 1176

ADJOURNMENT.—Motion made, and Question, "That the House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes after Eight o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies [H.L.].

Also STANDING ORDERS have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for additional provision in the following Bill:—Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1177

Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1177

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.].—The opposition to the Bill withdrawn 1177

London County Council Tramways and Improvements Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1177

Conway and Conwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Derby Gas Bill: Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, and read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 1177

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST, SMYRNA).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 15) Warrant, 1908, dated 12th February, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1177

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit until further order. [No. 35] 1178

County Courts Bill [H.L.].

The Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) 1178

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question agreed to.

Bill read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 36.]

THE LATE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

The Lord Privy Seal (The Marquess of Ripon) 1178
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1179
Earl Rosebery 1181

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Earl Rosebery.*)

The Marquess of Ripon 1183

On Question, agreed to, *nemine dissentiente.*

House adjourned at ten minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, at a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] (Petition for Additional Provision) (Standing Orders not Complied With.)—Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [Lords.]

Ordered, "That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders." 1183

Stockport Corporation Bill. (King's Consent signified.)—Bill read the third time and passed 1184

City of Glasgow Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1184

Police and Sanitary Committee.—Ordered, "That the Committee of Selection do nominate Three additional Members to serve on the Police and Sanitary Committee."—(*Mr. Burns*) 1184

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1184

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1184

Private Bills (Group B.)—Sir Henry Kimber reported from the Committee on Group B. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at Twelve of the Clock. Report to lie upon the Table 1184

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to: Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill, without Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords]

And also, a Bill, intituled Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords] 1184

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [Lords]; Briton Ferry Urban Distrct Council Bill [Lords]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1185

PETITIONS.

Children Bill (Juvenile Smoking Clauses).—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1185

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1185

Elections and Registration (London) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1185

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1185

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1186

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1186

Licensing Bill.—6 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 1186

Licensing Bill.—24 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1186

Moray Firth (Illegal Trawling).—Petition for prevention; to lie upon the Table 1186

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1186

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Railway Accidents.—Returns of Accidents and Casualties as reported to the Board of Trade; to lie upon the Table 1186

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 15) Warrant, 1908; to lie upon the Table ... 1186

Tropical Diseases Research Fund.—Report of the Advisory Committee for the Tropical Diseases Research Fund; to lie upon the Table 1187

Prices of Exported Coal.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.—Inquiry into the Table, and to be printed. [No. 97] 1187
Charities (Administrative County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 26th July, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 98] 1187

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Prosecution of Mr. F. Persee 1190
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Indian Railway Finance 1192
Nationality of Indian Magistrates 1192
Scottish Fishing Rights 1193
Employment of Auxiliary Labour in the Post Office 1193
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THE LATE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.*) 1231
Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 1232

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.—Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence and an Appendix, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 99.] 1234

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Walter Rea and Mr. Arthur Dewar; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Alfred Hutton and Mr. Rogers.

Report to lie upon the Table 1234

NEW BILLS.

Education (Continuation Schools) Bill.—Public Health Bill.—"To amend the Public Health Act, 1875, and the Local Government Act, 1888," pre- by Mr. Cooper; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Crooks, and Mr. Straus; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th May, and to be printed. [Bill 172.]

Mr. Chiozza Money (*Paddington*) 1234

Motion made and Question—"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish compulsory Continuation Schools in England and Wales, and to amend the Education Acts, 1870 to 1902, in respect of the age of compulsory school attendance,"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chiozza Money, Mr. Alden, Mr. Ellis Davies, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Mallet, Mr. Masterman, Mr. Walker, and Mr. John Ward.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 173.]

Licensing (Consolidation) Bill.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.*) 1238

Motion made and Question—"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate the Law relating to Justices' Licences for the sale by retail of intoxicating liquor"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Solicitor-General, and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

Bill to consolidate the Law relating to Justices' Licences for the sale by retail of intoxicating liquor, presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time on Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 174.]

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Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1239

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—*(Sir W. Robson.)*

Mr. Cochrane (Ayrshire, N.) 1240
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1243
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 1245
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 1246
Mr. Akers-Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) 1247
The Solicitor-General (Sir Samuel Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.) ... 1249
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 1250
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 1251

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Thursday.—*(Mr. Attorney-General.)*

Children Bill.—Order for Second Reading read

The Lord Advocate (Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs) 1251

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time.

Debate arising.

Mr. Akers-Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) 1262
Mr. A. Allen (Christchurch) 1270
Mr. Atherley-Jones (Durham, N.W.) 1275
Mr. Rawlison (Cambridge University) 1278
Mr. Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) 1282
Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.) 1284
Mr. H. J. Tennant (Berwickshire) 1286
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 1289

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned"—*(Mr. Guinness)*—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (FOREIGN PRESS)

Mr. Smeaton (Stirlingshire) 1300
Mr. Maddison (Burnley) 1305

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that accommodation should be provided in the House of Commons for representatives of the foreign and Colonial Press, and that such extension of the Reporters' Gallery or such increase of room elsewhere should be made as will suffice for this purpose."—*(Mr. Smeaton.)*

The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 1307
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (Liverpool, Scotland) 1311
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1314
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 1316
Mr Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) 1318
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 1321

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. Goulding (Worcester) 1324
Mr. Fletcher (Hampstead) 1331

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, regarding with anxiety the increase of unemployment among the working classes, is of opinion that with a view to its diminution such a reform of our fiscal system should be adopted as would check unfair competition, lead to a reduction in the hostile tariffs of foreign countries, provide a basis for mutual preference between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and increase the demand for labour at home."—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 1333

And it being Eleven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday next.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901, (LAUNDRIES).

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (Leicester) 1336

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Special Order of the Secretary of State, dated the 26th day of December, 1907, allowing as regards laundries that separate departments of work may be treated as separate factories or workshops, be annulled."—(*Mr. Ramsay Macdonald.*)

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 1340
Mr. H. J. Tennant (Berwickshire) 1344

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 26 ; Noes, 175. (Division List No. 50.)

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, WEDNESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the following Bills ought to be dispensed with—Ards and Bangor Railways ; London United Tramways.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Cambrian Railways Company ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the Margate Corporation Bill ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision.

And that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Bristol Docks Bill [H.L.] ought not to be dispensed with. 1349

Read, and agreed to.

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Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1349

Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1349

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1349

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 1349

North British and Mercantile Insurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments... 1349

Stockport Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^{a}, and referred to the Examiners 1350

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to order) 1350

Local Government Bill (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.] presented by the Lord Denman; read 1^{a}; to be printed and referred to the Examiners. (No. 39) 1350

PETITION.

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1350

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Railway Accidents.—Returns of Accidents and Casualties 1350

Mile End Old Town.—Report 1350

Explosion at Lord Ashtown's Lodge, Glenahiery, County Waterford.—Reports of County Inspector Jennings, Royal Irish Constabulary 1350

Postal Agreement (Mosambique).—Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom and the Post Office of the Portuguese Colony of Mozambique 1351

Irish Land Commission.—Return of Advances. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1351

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post). — (Portuguese East Africa.) The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 16) Warrant, 1908.

(Mauritius.)—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 17) Warrant, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1351

House of Lords Offices.—First Report from the Select Committee made, to be printed, and to be considered on Monday next. (No. 37.) 1351

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The Lord Privy Seal (The Marquess of Ripon) 1351

Moved, "That Standing Order No. XXXIX. be considered in order to its being suspended for this day's sitting."—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Onslow*) 1352

Moved, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 18th of June next: that no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill originating in this House shall be read a first time after Tuesday the 5th day of May next: that no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 18th day of June next: that when a Bill shall have passed this House with Amendments these orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended: that this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill later than Tuesday the 5th day of May next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the High Court of Justice after Thursday the 7th day of May next: that this House will not receive any Report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after Thursday the 7th day of May next."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That the said orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 38.)

Lotteries and Advertisements.—Commons' Message of Monday last considered (according to order.)

Moved, "That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message to consider and inquire into the Law: (1) As to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable"—*The Lord Steward* (*E. Beauchamp*)—Agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House 1353

Land Values (Scotland) Bill [Second Reading].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Herschell 1353

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*Lord Herschell.*)

Viscount Ridley 1359

Amendment moved—

"To leave out the word 'now' in order to insert the words 'this day six months.'"—(*Viscount Ridley*).

Viscount St. Aldwyn 1368
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1375
Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1384
Lord Saltoun 1390

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned until To-morrow."—(*The Earl of Mar and Kellie.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to and debate adjourned accordingly.

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Consolidated Fund Bill.

The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1393

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill.—Dublin and South Eastern Railway Bill; Seaham Harbour Bill—As amended considered; to be read the third time 1394

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Reported with an Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1394

Railway Bills (Group I.).—Mr. ASHTON reported from the Committee on Group 1 of Railway Bills: That Mr. Thomas Richards (Monmouth), one of the Members of the said Committee, was not present during the sitting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table 1394

Railway Bills (Group I.).—Mr. ASHTON reported from the Committee on Group 1 of Private Bills: That Mr. Stephen Collins, one of the Members of the said Committee, was not present during the sitting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table 1394

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords.]

Also a Bill, intituled, "Rhymney Railway Bill" [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [Lords] 1394

Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.]—Read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills. 1395

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [LORDS.]

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1395

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1395

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1395

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1395

Licensing Bill.—Seven Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 1396

Licensing Bill.—Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1396

Licensing Bill.—Thirteen Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table... ... 1396

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Moray Firth (Illegal Trawling).—Petition for prevention; to lie upon the Table 1396

Sale of Intoxicating Liquor on Sunday Bill.—Two Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table... 1396

RETURNS REPORTS, &c.

Irish Land Commission.—Return of Advances; to lie upon the Table ... 1396

Explosion at Lord Ashtown's Lodge, Glenahiery, County Waterford.—Reports of County Inspector Jennings, Royal Irish Constabulary; to lie upon the Table.

Coal Exports, Etc.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 100.]

Mile End Old Town.—Report upon an Inquiry into the Administration of the Guardians of the Hamlet of Mile End Old Town; to lie upon the Table ... 1397

Postal Agreement (Mozambique).—Postal Agreement for the Exchange of Postal Parcels between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Portuguese Colony of Mozambique; to lie on the Table 1397

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post).—Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 16) Warrant, 1908, to lie upon the Table ... 1397

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post).—Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 17) Warrant, 1908, to lie upon the Table ... 1397

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Post Office—Sick Pay of Unestablished Officers 1397

Evicted Tenants—Reinstatement of Mrs. O'Shaughnessy 1398

Reinstatement of Richard Foy 1398

New Wells in the Island of Lewis 1399

Local Educations Authorities adopting the Provisions of Meals Act 1399

The Bar Councils, Incorporated Law Society and the New Law Courts ... 1400

Licensing Compensation 1400

Rate of Wages at London Small Arms Factory 1401

Titles of Volunteer and Yeomanry Regiments 1402

Territorial Force Regulations 1402

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Royal Acadamy, Woolwich 1403

Government Licensed Property 1403

British Indians in Canada 1403

Indians at Vancouver 1404

Indentured Labour in the Witwatersrand Mines 1405

Medical Inspection of Native Labour at Witwatersrand 1405

Licensed Houses closed in Nottingham 1405

Child Customers in London Public Houses 1406

Clubs and the Licensing Bill 1406

Midland Railway Rehousing Scheme at Somers Town 1407

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Single School Areas... 1408
School Accommodation in the West Riding 1408
Barwick-in-Elmet School 1409
Education Syllabus 1410
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Burford Grammar School 1411
Enfield Small Arms Factory—Case of J. West 1412
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Letting of Scottish Sheep Farms 1413
Mrs. Hegarty's Bantur Estate 1413
Dromagh Untenanted Lands 1414
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City of Dublin Registration 1423
Ballyshannon Police Barracks 1424
Blennerhasset Estate, Kerry 1425
Irish Land—Originating Requests 1426
Sir R. Hudson's Cavan Estate 1426
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Irish Congestive Districts Board Fund 1427
Harlech Estate, Sligo 1428
Medical Inspection of Irish School Children 1428
Land Purchase at Aghatubrid 1429
Whaling Stations on Irish Coasts 1430
Finance 1431
Scottish Education Bill 1432

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—Lotteries and Advertisements—That they concur with the Commons in the Resolution of this House communicated to them on Monday last, "That it is expedient that a Select Committee of Five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of an equal number of Lords to consider and inquire into the law (1) as to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable," as desired by this House 1432

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Henry Cubitt Gooch, esquire, for the Borough of Camberwell (Peckham Division) 1433

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) [EXPENSES].—Committee to consider of authorising the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of Salaries, and remuneration, and of any expenses that may be incurred in pursuance of any act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884 (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow—(*Mr. Whiteley.*) 1433

NEW BILLS.

Cruelty to Animals Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 176] 1433

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Ballot (Transferable Vote) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 15th May, and to be printed. [Bill 177] 1434

Army (Annual) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 2—

Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) 1434
The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Haldane, Haddington) 1435
Mr. McCrae (Edinburgh, E.) 1436
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 1437
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 1437
Colonel Seely (Liverpool, Abercromby) 1439

Amendment negatived.

Clause 3 :

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Ashley 1440
Mr. Haldane 1440

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 208; Noes, 64. (Division List, No. 51.)

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

Mr. Ashley 1443

New Clause—

"(1) Subject to the provisions of this section no recruit shall, after the passing of this Act, be enlisted in the Regular Forces unless he can produce a certificate of his birth to the recruiter, nor unless he is eighteen years of age.

"(2) A recruit may be enlisted without the previous production of his birth certificate if the approving officer shall be satisfied that every reasonable effort had been made to obtain such certificate, and that it is not practicable to obtain it, but in that case such officer shall state in writing what steps have been taken to obtain such certificate, and why he is of opinion that it is impracticable to obtain it.

"(3) A recruit may be enlisted who is known or believed by the approving officer to be more than seventeen, but less than eighteen years of age, if such approving officer be of opinion that, by reason of exceptional physical health and development, such recruit will make an efficient soldier; but in that case such officer shall state in writing the height, weight, and chest measurement of such recruit, and any other circumstances which shall appear to such officer to justify the enlistment of such recruit. Every written statement made by an approving officer in pursuance of this section shall be transmitted to the Secretary of State, and a return of all such statements made in any year shall be laid before Parliament not later than the presentation of the annual Army Estimates to the House of Commons in the following year."—(*Mr. Ashley*).

Brought up and read a first time.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N) 1446
Mr. Courtney Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) 1447

Mr. Courthope (*Sussex, Rye*) ... 1447
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) ... 1448
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lancashire, N.W.*) ... 1449
Mr. Haldane ... 1450
Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) ... 1451
Colonel Seely ... 1452
Captain Faber (*Hampshire, Andover*) ... 1453
Captain Craig (*Down, E*) ... 1424
Mr. Ashley ... 1456
Mr. Hunt (*Shropshire, Ludlow*) ... 1457
Sir F. Banbury ... 1458

Question put.

The Committee divided : Ayes, 67 ; Noes, 241. (Division List No. 62.)

Mr. Ashley ... 1461

New clause—

"Amendment of Army Act, 1881, Section 42, by substituting 'Chief of the General Staff' for 'Commander-in-Chief.'"—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Viscount Castlereagh (*Maidstone*) ... 1462
Mr. Haldane ... 1462
Mr. Lambton ... 1464
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson ... 1464
Earl Winterton (*Sussex, Horsham*) ... 1464
Mr. Claude Hay ... 1466
Captain Craig ... 1466
Lord Balcarres ... 1467
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) ... 1468
Mr. Carlile (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) ... 1469
Mr. T. A. Corbett ... 1470
Mr. Courthope ... 1471
Sir F. Banbury ... 1472
Mr. Haldane ... 1472

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 71 ; Noes, 243. (Division List No. 53.)

Mr. Ashley ... 1475

New clause—

"To amend Clause 136 of the Army Act, 1881, by omitting the words 'or by any Royal Warrant for the time being.'"—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Haldane ... 1476

Question put and negatived.

Mr. Ashley ... 1477

New clause—

"To amend Clause 137 of the Army Act, 1881."—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Haldane ... 1477

Question put and negatived.

Mr. Claude Hay 1478
Mr. Haldane 1478
Captain Craig 1479

New Clause—
"To omit Section 44 of the Army Act, 1881."—(*Captain Craig.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Clause be read a second time."

Mr. Haldane 1479

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule.

Mr. Haldane 1480
Viscount Helmsley (*Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk*) 1480

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."—*Mr. Haldane.*

Sir Charles Dilke 1481
Mr. Claude Hay 1481
Mr. Haldane 1481
Mr. Carlile 1482

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—[Third Reading].—Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. Claude Hay 1482
The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1484
Mr. Carlile... 1485
Viscount Valentia (*Oxford*) 1486
Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 1488
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson 1489

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjournment.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Whiteley*).

Mr. George Whiteley 1490
Viscount Valentia 1490
Sir Charles Dilke 1489
Mr. Haldane 1491
Lord Balcarres 1491

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Six minutes before Eight o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 26th MARCH, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1^a; and referred to the Examiners 1493

London and Windsor Motor Roads, Tramroads, and Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with 1493

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Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1493

Audenshaw and Saddleworth Urban District Councils Bill [H.L.], now Audenshaw Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported with Amendments 1493

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order), and committed for Wednesday next 1493

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1493

PETITION.

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 1492

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

South Africa.—Correspondence relating to the recruitment of labour in the Nyasaland Protectorate for the Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia Mines 1493

Board of Education.—List of Public Elementary Schools and Certified Efficient Schools in Wales.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1493

Lunacy (Scotland).—General rules for the management of the Edinburgh District Asylum. Ordered to lie on the Table 1494

Business of the House.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and suspended for this day's sitting 1494

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª;

and Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended, Read 2ª (The Lord Privy Seal (*M. Ripon*). Committee negatived. Bill read 3ª, and passed 1494

Army Annual Bill.—Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 40) 1494

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Order of the day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, viz., "That the Bill be read 2ª this day six months."

The Earl of Mar and Kellie 1494
Lord Belhaven and Stenton 1499
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Elgin*) 1500
The Earl of Cranbrook 1503
Lord Abinger 1504
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1505
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1515
The Earl of Wemyss 1521

Amendment (by leave of the House) withdrawn; Then the original Motion agreed to; Bill Read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Sunday Closing (Shops) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order.)

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 ... ...

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1523

Page

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 26, to leave out from the beginning of paragraph (*a*) to the word 'mentioned' in line 27, and to insert the words 'The sale or offering for sale of any of the articles.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne*)

Lord Avebury 1524

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1524

Amendment moved—

"In Clause 3, page 2, line 13, to leave out the word 'nine' and to insert the word 'eleven.'— (*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord Avebury 1525
Lord Ashbourne 1525

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1526

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 21, to leave out the words 'or herbalist.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord Avebury 1526
The Earl of Crewe 1526

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Lord Swaythling 1527

Amendment moved—

"In line 34, after '1677' to insert the words 'Provided always that where the person alleged to have committed the offence being a person professing the Jewish religion (1) has not kept his shop open for the purpose of his trade, or sold or exposed or offered for sale any article from sunset on the Friday to sunset on the Saturday immediately preceding the alleged offence; and (2) has not employed for the purpose of his trade on the Sunday on which the offence is alleged to have been committed any person other than a person professing the Jewish religion, the consent required by the Sunday Observation Prosecution Act, 1871, shall not be given unless the offence shall have been committed after the hour of Three p.m. on such Sunday.'"—(*Lord Swaythling.*)

Lord Avebury 1528
Earl Beauchamp 1520
Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1539
Lord Stanley of Alderley 1531

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1531

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 35, after the word 'apply' to insert the words 'in England' and after the word 'State' to insert the words 'in Scotland to the Secretary for Scotland, and in Ireland to the Lord-Lieutenant.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

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On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7 :

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule :

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1531

Amendment moved—

"In line 15, to leave out the words 'sweets for immediate consumption" and to insert the words 'sweetmeats, fruit, and cooked fish, meat and eggs."—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord Avebury 1532
Lord Ashbourne 1532

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 6 agreed to.

Remaining clause agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended (No. 41.)

SMALL HOLDINGS.

The Earl of Stradbroke 1533
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 1534
The Earl of Onslow 1535

THE IMPORTATION OF HAY AND STRAW.

The Earl of Onslow 1536

Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to consolidate enactments relating to the Post Office was presented by the Lord Granard (*E. Granard*); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 42) 1537

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDERS 66 AND 67 NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—Ordered, that the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1538

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1538

Dublin Corporation (Various Powers) Bill (BY ORDER).—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.—Bill withdrawn 1538

Draycott Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1538

Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, &c., Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1538

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PETITIONS.

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1538

Licensing Bill.—Five Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 1538

Licensing Bill.—Eight Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1538

Moray Firth (Illegal Trawling).—Three Petitions for prevention; to lie upon the Table 1539

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill—Two Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1539

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Board of Education.—List of Public Elementary Schools and Certified Efficient Schools in Wales; to lie upon the Table 1539

National Schools (Ireland).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table 1539

Court of Probate Division (High Court of Justice) (Ireland).—Annual Account; to lie upon the Table 1539

South Africa.—Correspondence relating to the Recruitment of Labour in the Nyasaland Protectorate for the Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia Mines; to lie upon the Table 1539

Lunacy (Scotland).—General Rules for the management of the Edinburgh District Asylum; to lie upon the Table 1539

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Belfast Telegraphic Delays 1539
Kilcornan Evicted Farm 1540
Coolcappa Untenanted Lands 1540
Shanagolden Untenanted Lands 1541
Bourse Gambling 1541
Re-Direction of Lodgers Letters 1541
Post Office Telegraph Overseers 1542
Indian Public Companies 1542
Indian Garrison 1542
Indian Immigration 1542
Kushtia—Attempted Assassination of Mr. Hickinbotham 1543
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Tralee Railway Goods Rates 1544
Irish Exports Statistics 1546
Ballylongford Untenanted Lands 1546
British Postal Agencies in China 1547
British and Indian Armies 1548
Navy Engine Room Department 1549
Irish Travelling Post Offices 1550
Seaham Harbour Postal Facilities 1551
Sanitation at the Seaside 1551

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Imports of Peat-Moss Litter ... 1552
Burnfoot Prosecution for Cruelty to Cattle ... 1552
Great Southern and Western Railway Dispute ... 1553
Harrow Schools ... 1553
Income Tax ... 1554
Kilbrin Evicted Tenant ... 1555
Funerals of Indian and Crimean Veterans ... 1555
Sub-Target Rifle Machine Trials ... 1556

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Destruction of Cordite ... 1556
Stock of Cordite ... 1556
Norwegian Granite for Haulbowline Works ... 1557
Consumptive Soldiers ... 1558
New Forest Manœuvres ... 1558
Cordite and Mercuric Chloride ... 1559
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Cakijanu the Zulu ... 1563
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St. Helena ... 1564
Deportation of Sick Chinese from the Transvaal ... 1564
Repatriation of Chinese ... 1565
The Algeciras Convention ... 1565
Mecca Pilgrims ... 1565
Panama Labour ... 1566
Cotton Cultivation in Egypt ... 1566
Cordite Dispute with Messrs. Kynoch ... 1566
Privileged Cabs at London Railway Stations ... 1567
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Automatic Couplings ... 1568
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Danish Bacon and Lard ... 1569
Postage to Morocco ... 1570
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Teachers Registration Council ... 1573
Marble Arch Improvement ... 1573
Imports of Foreign Straw ... 1574
Tobacco Growing in Scotland ... 1574
Mail Service Contracts ... 1575

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Unlicensed Money Lending ... 1576
Foreign Trawlers in the North Sea ... 1576
Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill ... 1578
Scottish Congestion and Migration ... 1579
Campbeltown Sheriff's Judgment on Trawling ... 1579
Scottish Herring Fishery ... 1580
Orkney and Shetland Vigilance Case ... 1581
Grimsby Trawlers in the Moray Firth ... 1581
Clyde Herring Fishery ... 1582
Tralee Goods Rates ... 1583
Frauds on Irish Industries ... 1583
Irish Exports ... 1585
Case of Minnie Walsh ... 1585
Firies Outrage ... 1585
Ballingar Outrage ... 1585
Woodford Outrage ... 1586
Westmeath Cattle Drive ... 1587
Outrage on the Butler Estate ... 1587
Derrymore Outrage ... 1588
Warden Estate Evicted Tenants ... 1588
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Dublin Port Dues ... 1591
Licensing Compensation ... 1592
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Scottish Advocates ... 1593
Rights of Private Members ... 1594
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE ... 1595

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Secretary Gladstone, and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill: Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland, and Mr. Birrell.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Clancy, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. Healey, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Field, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Glover, Mr. Summerbell, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Lonsdale, and Mr. Barrie.

Reports to lie upon the Table ... 1596

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to: Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, without Amendment ... 1596

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NEW BILLS.

Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 178] 1596

Friendly Societies Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 179]... 1597

Licensing (Scotland) Amendment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 180] 1597

Education (Scotland).

The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 1597

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland; and for other purposes connected therewith," put, and agreed to. Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Sinclair, the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Education (Scotland) Bill.—"To amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 181.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).—Ordered, "That the proceedings on the Resolution relating to Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) [Expenses] have precedence this day of the Business of Supply."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 281; Noes, 62. (Division List No. 54.) ... 1602

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of the salaries and remuneration of the Director of Public Prosecutions and assistant directors appointed under any Act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, and of the Expenses incurred in pursuance of such Act."—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1605

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question to add the words 'such salaries not to exceed four thousand pounds in all.'"—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 1608
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) 1610
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1611
Sir F. Banbury 1614
Sir W. Robson 1616
Mr. Claude Hay 1617
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1617

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 49; Noes, 273. (Division List No. 55.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of the salaries and remuneration of the Director of Public Prosecutions and assistant directors appointed under any Act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, and of the Expenses incurred in pursuance of such Act." Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES).—Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) 1622

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'the cost of Administration in Ireland is excessive, is unduly burdensome to the people of that country, and is steadily increasing; that the expenditure is not subject to Irish control and is not allocated or administered in such a way as to promote efficiency in government or national well-being; that, so far from alleviating the injury inflicted on Ireland by over-taxation, this waste of her resources on certain services tends rather to aggravate it; and that this condition of affairs constitutes an intolerable grievance and demands the immediate attention of Parliament—(*Mr. Kettle*)—instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 1639
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 1644
Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.) 1648
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1654
Mr. Mooney (Newry) 1657
Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 1661
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N) 1664
Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.) 1665
Viscount Castlereagh (Maidstone)... 1667
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (Liverpool, Scotland) 1670
Mr. Verney (Buckinghamshire, N.) 1675
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) 1676
Mr. Wyndham (Dover) 1688

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.
Sir F. Banbury. 1693

Mr. RUNCIMAN rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 182; Noes, 31. (Division List, No. 56)

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.—Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next 1699

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Daylight Saving Bill.—Read a second time.
Bill committed to a Select Committee.—(*Mr. Robert Pearce*) 1699

Adjournment.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do now adjourn."
Sir F. Banbury 1699
Mr. Runciman 1699
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 1699
Mr. Morton (Sutherland) 1700
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) 1700
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 1700
Mr. J. A. Pease 1700

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: FRIDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1908.

Commission.—The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1.)
2. Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation.
3. Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation.
4. Madras Railway Company (Annuities) 1701

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1908.

The House met at 12 noon of the Clock.

Commissions.—Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went, and, having returned.

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to, four Bills 1701

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

City of Glasgow Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1701

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1701

PETITIONS.

Dairies (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1702

Licensing Bill.—10 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 1702

Licensing Bill.—16 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

Metropolitan Sewers and Drains Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

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Open Spaces (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; two lie upon the Table 1702

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 1702

Public Libraries Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1702

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1702

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Workmen's Insurance (Germany).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 102] 1703

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Urban District Council of Donaghadee, to lie upon the Table 1603

Turkey (No. 1, 1908).—Further correspondence respecting Proposals by His Majesty's Government for Reforms in Macedonia; to lie upon the Table ... 1703

Revenue (Collection of Taxes).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 103] 1703

Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Vaccination (Scotland).—The Fifty-third Annual Report to lie upon the Table 1703

Housing Conditions (Scotland).—Return showing the Housing Conditions of the Population of Scotland; to lie upon the Table 1703

Railway and Canal Traffic Acts, 1854 to 1894.—Nineteenth Annual Report; to lie upon the Table 1703

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Pay of Bexhill Telegraphists 1703

Post Office Telephones—Pay of Staff 1704

Moneylenders and Lord Mayor's Court Actions 1704

Age Retirement in the Inland Revenue Service 1705

Yard Craft No. 11 1705

Swine Fever 1706

Dismissal of Sir Arthur Vicars 1706

Lay Catholics educated at Maynooth College 1709

The J. W. Leahy Estate Dispute 1709

Registration of Clubs (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Sloan (Belfast, W.) 1710

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Sloan.*)

Mr. Patrick White (Meath, N.) 1714

Mr. Crean (Cork, S.E.) 1715

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now' and at end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. White*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. J. P. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green) 1717

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1720

Mr. Hart-Davies (Hackney, N.) 1723

The Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.) 1723

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Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1728
Mr. Watt (Glasgow, College) 1729
Mr. Farrell (Longford, N.) 1730
Mr. J. Devlin (Belfast, W.) 1731
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1733
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, E.) 1737
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 1737
Mr. W. E. Harvey (Derbyshire, N.E.) 1740
Mr. J. MacVeagh (Down, S.) 1742
Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) 1744

Amendment put, and negatived.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 26; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 57.)

Parliamentary Elections (Disqualification Removal) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Marnham (Surrey, Chertsey) 1747
Mr. Croydon Marks (Cornwall, Launceston) 1749

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir F. Banbury 1750

Mr. Goulding (Worcester) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted, and forty Members not being present—

The House was adjourned at Two minutes past Four of the Clock till Monday next.

End of Table of Contents to Vol. CLXXXVI.

VOLUME CLXXXVI.

ERRATA.

March 13th, 1908. Mr. Brace's Speech.

In Col. 52, line 24, *for* "14" *read* "40."

March 23rd, 1908. Bishop of St. David's Speech.

In Col. 1020, line 46, *for* "declared carried by the mayor" *read* "supported by 2 out of 25 members present."

March 23rd, 1908. Mr. Churchill's Speech.

In Col. 1124, line 10, *should read* "are responsible for bringing it to a."

In Col. 1138, line 50, *should read* "sanctioned was not to extend the term but to."

March 27th, 1908. Mr. MacVeagh's Speech.

In Col. 1742, line 24, *for* "a club in a sense was public" *read* "a man's club was a man's pub."

In Col. 1742, line 46, *for* "state of marine" *read* "State of Maine."

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 13th March, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Great Eastern Railway (Steamboats) Bill. Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.—(*The Deputy-Chairman.*)

PETITIONS.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Ayr, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT (1897).

Petition from Bristol, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Dollar; and Manchester; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Petition from Wick, for prevention; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Strood, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Bath; and, Wandsworth and Putney; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOYCOTTING (IRELAND).

Return [presented 11th March] to be printed. [No. 89.]

NAVY (VICTUALLING YARD MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS, 1906–7).

Annual Accounts presented, of the Cost of Manufacturing Provisions, Victualling Stores, etc., at the Home Victualling Yards and Malta Yard for 1906–1907, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 90.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council of Education in Scotland, dated 27th February, 1908, amending the terms of paragraph 2 of the Minute of 27th April, 1899, providing for the distribution of the sum available for Secondary or Technical (including Agricultural) Education, under Section 2, Sub-section (4), of the Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1898 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Regulations and Conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education, under Section 48 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, of Elementary Schools in Wales and Monmouthshire, being neither Public Elementary Schools nor Schools applying for recognition under any other Act of Parliament [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Reserve Sergeant-Majors' Pay.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, under the new Army scheme, the sergeant-majors of the Reserve battalions will receive 3d. a day less in pay and 3d. a day less in pension, and the colour-sergeants 6d. a day less in pay, than those non-commissioned officers of the same rank in the Line battalions, whilst the sergeant-majors and colour-sergeants of the Territorial Army will receive the same amount in pay and pension as the line battalions.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The pay and pension of the sergeant-major and colour-sergeant of the Special Reserve will be as stated in the Question *i.e.*, on the old Militia terms. The acting sergeant-majors and the colour-sergeants who are members of the permanent staff of the Territorial Force will receive the same rates of pay as the permanent staff of the Volunteers, viz., 3s. 6d. and 3s. respectively. As the first-named are acting sergeant-majors only, they will be eligible for pension at Class 1 rates, similar to those for quartermaster-sergeants. The pension for colour-sergeants will be at the same rate as if they were serving with their Line battalions. The acting sergeant-majors and colour-sergeants who are Territorial Force soldiers will be paid only during training and will receive Line rates. They get no pension.†

Brewery and Distillery Shareholders.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the number of ordinary shareholders, preference shareholders, and debenture holders, respectively, in breweries and distilleries registered under the Limited Liability Acts of the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is not possible to give my hon. friend the information he asks for with regard to the number of ordinary and preference shareholders in breweries and distilleries registered under the Limited Liability Acts without an exhaustive inquiry in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, which would take a considerable time. With regard to the number of debenture holders in such companies there is no information available at the Joint Stock Registries. I shall be very willing, however, to give my hon. friend information as to the number of shareholders in any particular company or companies which he likes to name.

Stationery and Law Books for County Courts.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state what sum is allowed annually for stationery to each County Court and

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† This Answer is in substitution for the Answer given on Thursday, March 12th.

Registrar's Court in England and Wales; and what law books and law reports are supplied at the public expense.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Twenty Courts continue to receive allowances for stationery, *i.e.*, pens, ink, and paper, but not reference books, ranging from £2 to £8 per annum. The total of such annual allowances is about £78. The remaining Courts are supplied by the Stationery Office with such stationery as they may demand. The total value is about £22,500. Of this sum the value of books supplied yearly is about £1,000. The latter are mainly sets of law reports for Judges of circuits, County Court diaries and almanacks, books on County Court practice and various law text-books and periodicals.

Places of Worship and the Cost of Street Paving.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he will say what, if any, recent decision of the Courts has given occasion for the introduction of the London Paving Expenses Bill, which is designed to relieve the owners of places of religious worship from certain paving rates at the expense of the general body of ratepayers.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) It was decided by the Courts some time since that consecrated churches of the Church of England are exempt from contributing to the paving of new streets in London, but that Nonconformist chapels are not. The object of the Bill is to place the chapels in London in the same position as the churches in this matter, as is the case elsewhere.

Politics in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will furnish to the House before the Post Office Estimates are discussed the full text of the regulations under which associations, political or other, are permitted or officially recognised when formed by postal servants.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) There are no regulations specifically dealing with political associations. The regulations or rules governing the conduct of officers of the Post Office as public servants in relation to political matters are as follows: Rule 42. (*a*) Officers of the Post Office, having been relieved of the electoral disabilities to which they were formerly subject, are now eligible to be placed on the parliamentary register, and to vote at a Parliamentary election. Nevertheless, it is expected of them as public servants that they should maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and not put themselves forward on one side or the other. (*b*) This is especially the case with postmasters and sub-postmasters, whose study it should be to retain that confidence of their neighbours and carefully to avoid doing anything that may lend colour to the suggestion that in the discharge of their official duties they are influenced by political or party motives. (*c*) On this subject the following regulations have been laid down: (i.) That no postmaster, sub-postmaster, or other servant of the Department shall serve on a committee having for its object to promote or prevent the return of a particular candidate to Parliament; (ii.) That he shall not support or oppose any particular candidate or party either by public speaking or writing; (iii.) That no notice soliciting votes for any particular candidate shall be exhibited either within or without any post office or other building under the control of the Department; and that within such buildings no memorial or address with a party object shall lie for signature or be exhibited. (*d*) If it be observed that a mail cart has affixed to it a placard soliciting votes for a particular candidate, it is the duty of the postmaster to have the placard immediately removed and to take the earliest opportunity of cautioning the contractor against a repetition of the impropriety. Postmen and other officers of the Department are forbidden, when in uniform, to take part in any demonstration of a party or political character. (*e*) So far as regards the districts in which servants of the Post Office are officially employed, the rule prohibiting their active interference in Parliamentary elections applies to elections for county councils. (*f*) The duties of a county councillor are regarded as incompatible with those which Post Office servants have to perform, and no Post Office servant, therefore, is allowed to become a candidate for a county council or to serve on one. (*g*) An officer of the Post Office may become a candidate for or serve on a district or municipal as well as a parish council. It must be understood, however, that in any case in which the duties either of the district or of the municipal or parish council conflict with those of the Post Office the officer concerned may be required to retire from the district, municipal, or parish council, as the case may be. On 28th August, 1893, Mr. Gladstone, as First Lord of the Treasury, and speaking officially in the House, stated as follows: "It is eminently desirable that there should be uniformity throughout the Civil Service and that the servants of the Post Office should be upon the same footing as those of the other Departments in respect to the franchise. As regards the Parliamentary franchise there can be no question that its exercise is absolutely free from external interference, although, of course, it is subject to the general obligation which affects the public servants, in common with all other voters, to use the franchise for the public good. Questions may be raised, on which I have no judgment to give on the part of the Government, as to how far, for example, it is desirable for public functionaries to make use of their position as voters for the purpose of obtaining from candidates promises or engagements tending directly to the advantage of public servants in respect of pay and promotion. These are matters which we deem not undeserving of consideration; but still they do not form the subject of any decision on the part of Her Majesty's Government in the nature of a restraint. The only restriction by the custom of the public service on persons employed is that persons in the permanent employment of the State shall not take a prominent or active part in political contests, and it is not intended in future that any other restrictive rule should be imposed on the service of the Post Office. As regards public meetings not of a political character, but relating to official questions, the Postmaster-General has decided to withdraw the restrictions at present in force. But in the Post Office, as in other Departments, it must be clearly understood that the right must be exercised subject to a due regard for the discipline of the public service."

Tobacco Growing in Scotland.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, under what statute or statutes the growing of tobacco in Scotland is prohibited; whether there are any, and, if so, what, statutory powers enabling that prohibition to be relaxed or dispensed with or enabling licences to be granted for the growing of tobacco in Scotland; and, if so, whether the tobacco so grown may be sold; what are the statutory provisions, if any, determining the Excise duty on tobacco grown in Scotland; and what is the amount of such Excise duty.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The Act 12 Car. II., chap. 34, which prohibited the cultivation of tobacco in England was extended to Scotland by the Tobacco Act, 1782 (22 Geo. III., chap. 73). There are no statutory powers enabling the prohibition to be relaxed or dispensed with, or for enabling licences to be granted for the growing of tobacco in Scotland. There is no statutory authority for levying an Excise Duty on tobacco grown in Scotland.

Extra Police at Headford, County Galway.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will give particulars of the alleged boycotting and intimidation because of which the police force in the Headford, County Galway, district has been so largely increased; and whether, in view of the fact that the increase is considered absolutely unnecessary by the people and the police themselves, orders will be given to have the extra police withdrawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that since 1st January last, five agrarian offences have been committed in the police district of Headford. Four families are partially boycotted, and two of these families, together with a third family, are receiving police protection. It is, for obivous reasons, undesirable to publish the names of the persons affected. The police authorities consider the increased force at Headford to be absolutely necessary for the present, and it cannot therefore be withdrawn.

Reinstatement of Edward Smith of Glassdrummon.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will say whether it is intended to reinstate Edward Smith, who was evicted out of his farm in Glassdrummon, on the Neville estate, County Cavan, and whose farm is still in the landlord's hands; what is the name of the inspector who has had this matter in hand; will he say what steps have been taken; and whether the evicted tenant will be put into possession; and, if so, the probable date.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had the holding inspected and have intimated to the owner the amount which they are prepared to advance to Edward Smith for the purchase of the holding if he should be reinstated. The Commissioners have not yet received a reply from the owner, but are addressing a further communication to him on the subject. The Commissioners do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by disclosing the name of their inspector. The Commissioners themselves are responsible for any action that may be taken in the case.

The Case of Cornelius Scollans, late 4th Royal Irish Fusiliers.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will have the case of Cornelius Scollans, ex-sergeant instructor of musketry, 4th Royal Irish Fusiliers, who, after 23 years and 140 days service, was discharged medically unfit, on a small pension, owing to an accident received on duty in the last year of his service, considered with a view to increasing his pension; will he consider whether his claim comes under Articles 1201A and 1173A; and, as this man can no longer work, and is solely dependent upon his pension and the assistance of his children for his support, will these facts, together with his advanced years be taken into consideration by the authorities so that some small increase may be specially granted.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This case is being investigated by the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, and the result of the inquiry will be communicated to the hon. Member.

Regulations for the Territorial Force.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the promised volume in the list of military books published by authority, entitled Rules of Procedure, and stated to be in preparation, is likely to appear before the Second Reading of the Army (Annual) Bill; and whether any steps have been taken to produce an intelligible compilation of the provisions of the King's Regulations affected by the creation of the Territorial Force and recent alterations in the Army Act, such as those contained in the Territorial Forces Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A copy of the Rules of Procedure was laid on the Table of the House on 30th January, and can be obtained from the Library. A revise of the King's Regulations is now in press, and will, it is hoped, be issued shortly. This revise takes cognizance of all alterations in the Army Act. The King's Regulations do not deal with the Auxiliary Forces, who have hitherto had their own books of regulations. This practice will continue, and the War Office is now engaged in drawing up a book of Territorial Force Regulations.

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN BILL.

*MR. P. W. WILSON (St. Pancras, S.) in rising to move the Second Reading of the Unemployed Workmen Bill said: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that this morning I am faced by a somewhat formidable task, in the discharge of which I shall plead for the indulgence of the House, and possibly also for some measure of forbearance on the part of my friends. I have been a good deal criticised in public and in private for having taken up this Bill, but I will venture to lay before the House three simple considerations. First of all, this problem, which is a national problem, is long overdue. In the second place, we shall not dispose of this problem by pretending that we have forgotten about it. If we are perplexed, as some of us are, then it is better that we should seek some solution in the comparative privacy of a Friday afternoon when a suspicious number of Members have sought refreshment in the country, than that we should go year after year back to our constituents with apologies upon our lips. I have never criticised the administration of the Local Government Board either under my right hon. friend or under his predecessor. This Second Reading is not moved as a vote of censure upon Governments, whether past or present. Many of us who support this Second Reading voted for the Government in a somewhat critical division on the Address, and I submit to the House that the figures of that division indicate a concern and anxiety which is not confined to any section of the House in reference to this problem. In the next place, I welcome and endorse all the exposure which has been made from that bench of our existing methods. We agree with my right hon. friend that charity has failed. We agree that soup kitchens on the Thames Embankment, however useful they may be to a Cabinet Minister who may be wandering about in Windsor uniform, are absolutely useless for the purpose of relieving this problem. We have also our suspicion as to the administration of out-door relief. All these criticisms we put in as part of our case. We welcome them because they prepare the mind of the House for a proper policy. They show that the present position is impossible, and that advance is now inevitable. I will just trouble the House with one simple quotation, it will be very short. It comes from the Report of a Distress Committee:—

> "The Committee are of opinion that the Act of 1905 has altogether failed to benefit the class of persons specially aimed at. They are, however, of opinion that the Act by Amendment and amplification can be made most beneficial."

That opinion comes, not from Poplar, not from West Ham, it comes from the great municipality of Glasgow, the birthplace, if I may say so, for the benefit of my hon. friend here, of Adam Smith [AN HON. MEMBER: No, he had a chair there.] Well, he went to Glasgow when he had arrived at years of discretion. Now, there are some who pin their faith to indirect methods of dealing with this problem, and a very convenient faith it is. I have nothing to say against the value of licensing reform, land reform, housing reform, an eight-hours day, and I will not even argue the question whether the taxation of the poor man's larder will, as we are told it will in the protectionist camp, give us a lower income-tax and work for all. I will merely remind the house that the burden of unemployment is equally as grave in Berlin, Chicago, and New York as it is in London, Manchester, or Sunderland. On the general question of indirect methods I would point out to the House that while it is right to seek to improve the general health of the body politic, we must also treat special maladies on their own ground. There was a piece of special inquiry at Whitechapel, conducted by the residents of Toynbee Hall. They investigated the causes, and they came to the conclusion that in a large number of cases the causes were economic as well as individual, as even in prosperous times you have an average margin of unoccupied labour. That was the view of the late Parliament. We have the Act of 1905, for which we are all ready to give full credit to hon. Members opposite, which recognises the duty of society as a whole to the unemployed man. May I just give to the House one further quotation, which I give for the very simple reason that it is an acccount of the Act of 1905 by one who took part in those debates. A Member of this House at that time said—

> "It recognised the right of the man to call upon the State to provide him with work. The State replied by recognising the right, but would not provide the work. The Bill was like a motor-car without petrol, or only such petrol as it could beg on the road, an elaborate machine without motive power. Personally he was not afraid; he wished that its object had been enlarged."

Whose words were those? They were the words of the right hon. Gentleman who was now the President of the Board of Trade, and my loyalty to the Government prevents me from disagreeing with him. I will also remind the House of the King's Speech of 1906. I will not argue the question whether the promise in that Speech indicated a grant of £200,000 partly to the unemployed and partly to the Sinking Fund. I will not argue that point, I will simply say that by this grant, the present Government endorsed the Act of 1905, and endorses the policy of that Act as one on which both sides of the House are agreed. What is the history of this present Bill? We are all agreed that organised trade unions in this country represent, in the usual term, the cream of the working class. They have done all that they can to deal with unemployment in their own way. In this great task they have had no help from the State. Help from the State! At one period the State stepped in and actually mulcted them of the very funds which they were devoting to this beneficent purpose. There has been a suggestion that the trade unions should have a proportional subsidy for unemployment benefit allowance, and it has been pointed out to me that that is not in the Bill. I wish to say that it is solely a matter for the Treasury, and that in these days we can do that, and almost anything else, on the Appropriation Act. The trade unions are represented by three central organisations—the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trades, and the Labour Representation Committee. It was a Joint Committee of these three centra- organisations, quite as much representaltive of the other as of this side of the House, which drafted this Bill, and I would point out that it was placed first upon the list of measures for which, according to the Committee of Advanced Radicals—I believe that is what we call ourselves—we were invited to ballot at the beginning of the session, and it was at the request of Members on my own side of the House, without reference to the suspects on the Bench opposite, that I took up this Bill. I have a great deal of ground to clear, I am bound to do it, and I must say a word as to the Royal Commission on Poor Law. Royal Commissions we all know, are one of the innocent hypocrisies of public life, and no Member of this House talking over a Royal Commission in the lobbies fails to smile the smile of the Roman augur. If a Government is not particularly anxious at the moment to deal with Welsh Disestablishment they appoint a Royal Commission, with a judicially-minded Chairman. Hon. Members opposite had agreed to appointing this particular Royal Commission, but when we were on that side of the House they accused us of coquetting with Socialism. What about this Royal Commission which is dominated by the Fabian Society, and in respect of which doubtless we have an explanation of the fact that there was such an extraordinary spread of Socialism in the recent Amendments to the Address on the part of the Conservative Party opposite? On general grounds you cannot permanently refer this question to a Royal Commission, however able and however exhaustive its inquiry may be. Now, let us look at the Bill itself. It consists of two parts: the machinery clauses on the one hand, and the working clauses on the other. I will begin with the machinery clauses. At present the Distress Committees are sporadic bodies, working in a tentative fashion, a kind of isolated excrescence on our general system of local government. The Bill establishes regular Unemployment Committees for all authorities, I think, of over 20,000 population, otherwise it is the County Council. Before we go a step further, you have there at any rate a uniform policy applied to the whole country, and you will never stop the dramatic march of the unemployed from one district to another or the far more serious silent drift from one district to another until you have a uniform policy applied to the whole country. In the first place the first duty of these Unemployment Committees is to register the unemployed. With that registration we shall for the first time have what we have not at present, accurate returns for casual, as well as organised labour. That register is in itself almost a ready-made universal system of labour exchange. We have to deal with the small margin of labour, say, 5, 7 or 10 per cent., whatever it is we do not know.

Let me point out to the House that the State itself is already the largest consumer of labour, whether direct or by contract. We have no vestige of an attempt so to schedule the labour given out by the State as to deal with this margin of unemployed from private sources. We have been discussing the Navy Vote, and we have been told that the Admiralty are going to build docks all along the sea coast by way of showing affection for the German Ocean. If all the millions they are going to spend in the next ten years on those docks were added to other public expenditure, the result would be enormous. We in London are going to enlarge and add to our port. We are converting our trams at the cost of milllons from horse traction to electricity. This is precisely the kind of work which the trade unions are not at the moment able to deal with so well. It is labour which is arduous and muscular rather than skilled labour, just the sort of labour which we want for the unemployed of a city. At this moment the State is the largest builder of public buildings. We in London are going to put up a palace on the Thames Embankment. Its cost will be £2,000,000 of money, of which £600,000 or £800,000 will be spent in wages. We are told in this House that this question of unemployment is specially urgent in the case of the building trade, and why is it not possible to schedule public buildings of that sort and so regulate trade from time to time and season to season. At any rate there is no attempt to do this at present. The Bill also gives us a central committee to advise the Local Government Board. The Secretary of State for War has told us that if we want to organise our Army we must do hard thinking, and we want a body of experts to take hold of this business thinking hard not to give us a nation in arms, but in order to give us a nation at work. Then we have in this Bill three Commissioners. There is a precedent for that in the Small Holdings Bill, and I think the problem of unemployment is very parallel to that of small holdings, because here, as there, you will have to break new ground, you have to deal with varied local conditions by adaptable schemes. Now I come to the working clauses, and I want to point out that the working clauses deal with two distinct subjects: the work of the national authority, and the work of the local authority. All the criticism of this Bill has been directed against work provided by the local authority. But if you cut that out of the Bill altogether you would have still a very useful advance in this matter. You would have the Local Government Board itself under the wise leadership of my right hon. friend establishing national schemes of afforestation, farm colonies, or coast erosion, or whatever may be considered suitable. I am told that that means national workshops, but I can only say that that is one of the many things which are not in this Bill. You must have a right if you are going to deal with a question of this sort to frame your measure, and you may be perfectly certain that if you want to call a spade a spade, you will also have, according to the lawyers, to call it by a good many different names. I do think that "Paris in 1848" has done duty enough. You take a city in a state of revolution, with barricades in the street, and public opinion in an absolutely electrified condition, and you say that that is a fair parallel to a country which has enjoyed sixty years of unmistakable municipal progress and pacific social development. I come to the most provocative part of this Bill. I notice particularly on reading my right hon. friend's speech that with remarkable accuracy he made use of his now historic phrase "universal pauperism qualified by gaol." [Mr. JOHN BURNS: Tempered.] I beg pardon, "universal pauperism tempered by gaol." I am glad of that interruption, because I want the House to know how accurate my right hon. friend's mind is in working when he is dealing with this matter. He limited that criticism to certain provisions, which you will find in *Hansard*. I am perfectly certain that those provisions do not include registration or such clauses for national work as might easily be drafted on the present clauses. It applies to the provision of work and maintenance by the local authority. The hon. Member for Leicester on Wednesday went to Battersea and made a speech. He said—

> "I view with great terror"—

note the words—

> "the return of the Opposition to power."

Most sound doctrine, which I hope my hon. friend will repeat elsewhere. He further said he had no objection to amendments to this Bill provided that they did not strike at its principle, and what is its principle? That unemployment should be regarded as a national and not as a local problem, and with regard to that principle, which is the principle of the Bill, there is a great deal of common ground. I have always been prepared either to postpone or to amend the right to work, and I think this has been common knowledge on the Front Bench. But I must say that, even with regard to the right to work clause, there has been a certain amount of misapprehension. I will not argue the question whether employment by local authorities according to this Bill must be at a standard rate of wages or not. It is an arguable question. But I certainly understood that it was not in the Bill, and I should be prepared to cut it out if it is in the Bill. One thing is certain and that is that there must be maintenance, should the necessity arise. This Bill contemplates coming to the assistance of a man before he has lost his self-respect, instead of coming to his assistance when he has got right down into the gutter. The local authority need not under this Bill supply work at all, provided that it deals with the maintenance problem, which it can do by gift, or a very simple Amendment would make it possible to deal with it by loan or by the issue of rent tickets. I admit that this clause has very important financial aspects for national and local finance, but I do want on the general principle to make an especial appeal to county Members. They have come over and over again to this House and asked us to pity the agricultural labourer, and they have said that the agricultural labourer should have security of tenure. Now what is security of tenure, unless it be the right of continuous work and an assured home to live in? I am simply asking that the security of tenure, which it is the avowed policy of the Government to extend to the agricultural districts, should be applied to my own constituents, who live in tenements, and who are just as fond of their one little room as the agricultural labourer is of his whole cottage, and just as much entitled to consideration by this House. I come back again to the penal clause. That is at least a statement of principle and a statement of a salutary and wholesome principle. We could not ask this House to recognise in any form the right to work unless we also were agreeable at any rate to impose the duty of work, and even here we have made a very important concession which I recommend to the notice of hon. Members opposite. The penal clause is not so drastic as to be applied to the wealthy classes, to the millionaires, or the landholders, or the brewery shareholders. We have only applied it to those who cannot themselves provide maintenance and because in our practical experience we have come to the conclusion that you can never solve this problem until you segregate the loafer and the unemployable, who were so accurately described by the hon. Member for Camberwell a few days ago as those who live as parasites on the classes above them, dragging them down to their own level. In this formidable task I have one encouragement. I am to be opposed by somebody, and I rather hope it is my hon. friend the Member for Preston. Whenever I regard the broad philosophic brow of my hon. friend I am always reminded of the University of Oxford, which was once described as "The Home of Lost Causes.' At the same time I am not going to trouble the House with any attempt to answer the economic propositions laid down in a reasoned Amendment. I want to avoid, as far as possible, anything of a purely debating character. I have the notes here, but I think the House would be relieved if I allowed somebody else to take part in this debate. I bring forward this Bill as a convinced Liberal. I believe that Liberalism, if it is to be of any value as a political faith, must be based upon respect for the individual, and that is the basis of legislation for old age, for children, or for sweated workers. This is the only Bill before the House, it is the only hint of a positive policy, on this subject. It is possible that a better hope may arise this afternoon and that there may be a definite pronouncement—I do not know—on this subject. But I do think that we might at any rate put a time limit to the activities of the Royal Commission. I am not fighting for this clause or that clause, but I am fighting for a constructive policy, and if I may just conclude I would simply read to the House a letter sent to me this morning unsolicited, from the police court missionary of the Thames Court House, Stepney, London. This is what this Mr. Fitzsimmons writes—

> "As a worker amongst the poor and the unemployed in the East End for almost twenty years, I heartily wish you success in your effort to-morrow. Certainly not less than fifty, and possibly sixty, persons have since 1st January been driven to commit crime and have been charged at this Court through being out of work and starving in consequence. I have no doubt you will be told that things are not so bad as that, and that the distress committees have a surplus, but are you aware of the numbers of unemployed who have applied in Poplar and Stepney for work, and whom the distress committees have not been able to help? Like the following case: A most respectable man, named Knight, aged thirty-two, wife and three children, out of work since December, gives references to past employers, one of two years, another of twelve years, has been a Volunteer, volunteered for active service, and did one year and ninety-seven days in South Africa; discharge paper marked for conduct, 'Very good.' He has been twice weekly to the distress committee at Stepney, told he must wait his turn, hundreds have their names down before him, and he had not a bit of food yesterday or this morning. Wife and children had a bit of bread yesterday."

That is my case, Mr. Speaker, and I beg to move that this Bill be read to-day a second time.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester) said he thought he could with great propriety congratulate his hon. friend both on the very graceful way in which he had made peace with his friends and also on the remarkable clearness and ability in which he had expounded the Bill, the Second Reading of which he had moved, and he would like, in seconding that Resolution, to emphasise what he had said about the origin of the Bill. This Bill, like the Trade Disputes Bill introduced in the House in 1906, was a Bill which had behind it the combined forces of labour in this country. Let there be no mistaking that. As a matter of fact, he thought the indications that combined labour had shown regarding its interest in this Bill were even greater and more emphatic than the indication which it gave regarding its interest in the Trade Disputes Bill. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, and the Congress itself, the General Management Committee of the Federation of Trade Unions, and the Executive of the Labour Party, and the Labour Party itself, together with two special conferences called from every trade union in the country, had unanimously and emphatically declared that they were in favour of the principle that they had sought to embody in this Bill. He was perfectly prepared to admit that the Bill had far-reaching results, that perhaps for the first time in the history of the House the problem of the unemployed man was being faced straight away from top to bottom. The Bill did not propose to remedy the problem from the beginning; it only proposed to deal with the results of certain industrial and economic factors. Legislation that was to remedy the problem from the beginning must be of a different character. They had already indicated from their side of the House, and the Government had also indicated, certain lines upon which this problem should be attacked fundamentally, but whilst they had done that they must remember that there was an enormous reponsibility placed upon the House to alleviate the distress which was the result of the evil conditions under which they lived. The general plan of the Bill was very simple. It imposed certain responsibilities and duties upon certain authorities, partly local and partly national; it declared that there was a combination of interests and responsibilities in this matter, that Whitehall, together with the town hall of every considerable place in the country, must join their forces, intelligence, and powers in alleviating the distress which arose from unemployment. Therefore, the machinery which had been described so well by his hon. friend had been created, based upon the experience of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council and of the Advisory Committee of the Education Department, and upon the proposal of the Government contained in last year's Land Act in respect to Commissioners. There was not much dispute about that machinery, so he would pass on. He felt perfectly certain that when he referred to Clause 3 everybody who had studied the Bill would say: "Yes, that is the centre of the Bill." His hon. friend had said he was willing to postpone Clause 3, but he was bound to confess that they on that side of the House were not. Clause 3 to them was the kernel of the measure. They had never hidden the fact, they had preached the fact from the housetops, and they would leave that House and continue preaching from the housetops the same gospel. The Labour Party stood for the right to work; they had nothing to withdraw from that and no modification to make. The Labour Party was perfectly prepared to admit that to carry out the principle of the right to work without care or consideration might be an exceedingly dangerous and disastrous proposal, but the Labour Party, in drafting this Bill and this clause, had indicated by limiting words and expressions, and also by supplementing Clause 3 by Clause 12, that they were perfectly prepared to allow bye-laws stating the conditions of the application of Clause 3. They had come to the conclusion—and every economist (with the exception of the economists who stood for lost causes; not only lost causes but dead causes, causes that were only mourned over now), and every social investigator, with Mr. Charles Booth at their head, had laid down the dictum that modern industry demanded a surplusage of labour in order to carry it on. There was another doctrine which he believed was just as acceptable to those who had thought it out, and that was that modern industry also required, every now and again, a critical condition of unemployment. It did not only require its 2 per cent. always, but it required its 10 per cent. occasionally, so that whilst in the shady corner of the stage of life they had for ever the tragedy of unemployment being played, they had, periodically, right out in the full glare of the footlights, the same tragedy coming to disturb their consciences and to give them political troubles as well. There was the starting point in the Bill. If they agreed with that starting point would they not agree with this corollary, that if they had to have unemployment, not because the men unemployed were inferior in character to the men employed, but because of the very nature of the organisation of their industry they must have that margin—would they not agree with him that it was a logical, fair, and humane corollary that the burden of unemployment should not be placed upon the backs of those weak men? If it was necessary for society that a section should be without work, was it not the duty of society to take care that that section should not be trodden down to destruction? The more clearly that they understood intellectually the character of this problem, the more difficult was it morally to refuse to recognise the right to work; the more clear their intelligence became regarding the nature of unemployment, the more impossible was it for them to say: "This is a passing phenomenon that has to be dealt with by charity or philanthropy, or by some odds and ends of legislation." The movement for dealing with the unemployed was bound to go more and more in the direction of Clause 3. Some of his friends on both sides of the House fancied they heard a sort of rumble of the tumbril of Socialism; they saw through this clause a sort of doleful and melancholy procession of some doomed king to the Place de la Concorde where a Socialist executioner with a red cap was going to chop off his head. It was a nightmare vision, and he was bound to say that, judging by the newspapers that morning, those who used to be in high places were very troubled by those nightmares. But if that was so, he would like to know who it was that led the Sansculottes to the bombardment of the Bastille? Who was it that took the Judiths of Saint Antoine out on the streets to start this Revolution? Nobody else but the right hon. Gentleman who represented Dublin in this House. He began it all. He was the man who said to the unemployed: "Entertain expectation to work for the State and of employment by the State." He it was who said to them: "Go to your town halls and your distress committees, and put your name down as being unemployed." He it was who said: "I will supply money or machinery, I will supply money to open registers, and to buy land, and create committees, and employ clerks, and buy red tape," in order that all this sort of thing should be done. If the sound of Socialism filled the ears of his more timorous friends, it was started by the iniquitous operations of the right hon. Gentleman. In 1905 they had that Act. He did not want always to praise that Act, but this was what happened under the Act. In 1907 87,001 applications were received. Of those, after full inv stigation, and in some districts the investigation was inquisitorial to a degree—60,416 passed, the dependents of whom reached the appalling total of 152,801. They were told that they were all right and exactly the sort of people that the right hon. Gentleman had in mind when he passed his beneficent and humanitarian legislation. Sixty thousand passed, 36,000 received employment. Even the miserably inadequate assistance given under the Act was only given to 36,000 out of 60,000, and to-day the figures were getting worse and worse. Did any practical politician imagine for a single moment that after they had created such machinery, and raised such expectations they were going to stop it? Did the House say for a moment that now they were going to stop finding work or giving maintenance by hook or by crook? They could not do it. It was not possible, because they were now subject to such a steady economic and industrial pressure that they were bound to yield sooner or later. The House was now a mere chip floating on the top of the tide which was begun by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin. How did they propose to make the Bill effective? He hoped the House would be good enough to read the Bill accurately. It was perhaps occasionally somewhat badly drafted, but in that respect they followed the Government. Clause 3 of the Bill said that, subject to conditions thereinafter to be imposed, it would be the duty of the local unemployment authority to find work in connection with one or other of the schemes thereinafter provided, or otherwise, or failing the provision of work, to provide maintenance should necessity exist, for the necessaries of life, provided that a refusal on the part of the unemployed workman to accept reasonable work upon one of those schemes or other employment upon conditions not lower than those that were standard to the work in the locality should release the local unemployment authority of its duty under the section. Hon. Members seemed to think that that meant that the local unemployment authority had to provide work at trade union rate of wages, but he would like to know what provision of the clause provided for that. All it meant was this. Let them assume that a trade unionist had to appear before a distress committee, and that a fortnight before he was offered work in the ordinary way of business at wages which were not standard to that district, say at 5d. an hour when his trade union rate was 7½d. an hour. All that was provided for by this clause was that that man who had refused such work, or in other words had declined to become a blackleg, would not have that offer of work thrown in his teeth and regarded as a reason why the distress committee should not assist him. He was willing to admit that the clause might be badly drafted, but the statement he had made was its meaning so far as they were concerned, and in voting for the Bill they were voting for Clause 3 with that meaning. Besides, in Clause 12 provision was made for bye-laws determining the conditions under which Clause 3 was going to operate. Clause 12 ran—

> "The Local Government Board shall, after consultation with the Central Unemployment Committee, frame rules for the carrying out of this Act, and may, by those regulations amongst other things regulate the manner in which any duties under this Act are to be performed or powers exercised by any local unemployment authority."

Clause 4 of the existing Act had been found to be most efficacious in laying down conditions, and if Clause 12 of the Bill in Committee required elaboration or extension so that it might be as comprehensive as Clause 4 of the existing Act, they were perfectly prepared to support such extensions. There was an objection or two to the Bill to which he should like to refer. They were told that if Clause 3 came into operation it would be quite unnecessary for a man out of work to try and find work, and that seemed to be a most serious objection. He wondered if right hon. and hon. Members were ever out of work. A good many of them had been undoubtedly, and he wondered how many of them would tell the House that it was a most blessed experience sent from heaven to discipline them and make them better men than they were before, to be out of work, tramping the streets in rain and in sunshine, going about cadging and losing one's humanity, going about from factory to factory and from workshop to workshop begging to be employed, and going home every day without anything found, feeling a horrible sense that one was abandoned by his neighbours and fellow-men. If that was an experience that hon. Members opposite wanted to retain as a precious possession for the twentieth century let them say so; and, if not, let them stop talking about the fearful damage that was going to be done by making it impossible for men to walk about the streets begging for work. Then they said that if they gave good maintenance, they were undertaking something not only objectionable but exceedingly costly. Why was that so? Supposing under Clause 12 they laid down certain conditions for maintenance. Supposing they compelled a compositor to give two or three hours a day, while work was being found for him, to teaching a typographical class in St. Bride's Institute. Supposing they thus got a *quid pro quo* for society for the maintenance they were giving him, he ventured to say they were making an admirable bargain. The essential point was that which his hon. friend had made. It was all very well for the House to say it provided for the poverty-stricken. It did, that was admitted. It provided for them when they got to the gutter. It provided for the poverty-stricken when they had entered the sombre gates of the workhouse. The Labour Party had come into existence to help the poverty-stricken while they were still capable of working. It was all very well to talk about the cost. The cost would not be more than one "Dreadnought" per annum. The House must not forget, when dealing with economic problems, that its coin was not always gold and silver. It was often of a human quality; and, if they were going to allow a human mass to fester in their midst, they were reducing the vitality of their women and demoralising their men; and from such sources they were creating a poisoned centre which would lower their national vitality. That was the coin in which they were going to pay for this chronic state of unemployment. Pounds, shillings, and pence were too often before the eyes of sections of the House. The human character of the nation was too frequently put aside without adequate consideration. There was another point. There was a misunderstanding about the clause. He was perfectly prepared to shoulder all the responsibility for bad drafting that might hedge about the Bill, but there was a misunderstanding about the clause in so far as it seemed to be assumed that their purpose was to put unemployed men to their own work. He knew that in the opinion of some hon. Members he and his friends were an exceedingly foolish party, and that their ideas had carried them away. Hon. Members said that the difference between themselves and the Labour Party was that the latter lived in heaven and the former were content to dwell upon earth. He did not very much mind it; but this Bill was not a case in point. They never suggested in this Bill, and they never had it in their mind when they were drafting its provisions, that that should take place. It was a complex thing, and it required much longer time than was at his disposal to classify the unemployed. The unemployed was not a simple expression at all. It was an exceedingly complicated expression. It consisted of everything and everybody. One man's cure was another man's poison. That was much more true of the unemployed and unemployment than perhaps of any other social problem with which they had to deal. The promoters of the measure were convinced—and a good many of them had had practical experience of these committees and boards of guardians—that they could create a system upon that Bill, and that they could apply the principles embodied in it and give adequate relief when a man had become unemployed, either permanently or temporarily—permanently by drafting him on to the land, or temporarily by giving him some maintenance. They believed that they could adapt the sort of work provided for them in accordance with their skill in a graded scale of employment. They did not want relief work. That was a fallacy. They did not want to put a spade in a man's hand and tell him to go and dig a hole. That was no good. If it ended there, it was no good, but if it subserved something else, of course it was good. They wanted training work. They did not want to put men to the same work they were doing now, because that would only increase the volume of unemployment. Hon. Members must not think they were the only people who were aware of those considerations. Casting his mind back over twenty years, he had known some hon. Members in that House who had fallen foul of him because he did suggest that the problem was difficult, more difficult than they thought at the time. He stood where he stood then. They did not want to put the unemployed to the same work as that which they could not get in the open market. He hoped the House would take that as a very definite and decisive statement. Moreover, they did not want to supply the same market as existed now. Of course, it was one of the aspects of the phenomena of unemployment that the market was overcrowded. There was the fact, and they had in their minds in constructing this machinery and in imposing this duty upon the State, that new markets should be found, that new work should be found. It might have expression in this way: the utilisation of waste labour upon waste national resources. He had trespassed long on the time of the House. They felt there was no use in blinking the point—that this was a very large question for a Friday afternoon. There were limits to a Friday afternoon debate which could not be exceeded; otherwise, a certain result might follow. But to-day they had an Amendment, clear, definite, and within narrow compass. If they had a vote on that Amendment the Labour Party would be perfectly satisfied. He hoped they were going to have a vote on it. All sides of the House, he believed, were agreed to take a vote. The Labour Party welcomed it. They would be heartily sorry if they did not get that vote. So far as the general principles of their Bill were concerned they felt that it was perhaps necessary to trespass somewhat upon the indulgence of the House, in order to remove some misconceptions, and to make clear certain statements in the Bill which might not be perfectly clear. Right hon. and hon. Members must not expect that this agitation was going to be buried or ended to-day. That was a mere incident in a big agitation. It was the mere opening sentence in a chapter which might be long, which might be exciting, and might be portentous, so that it was necessary for them to make a clear statement of what they meant and what they proposed in the Bill. He felt perfectly certain that the Government was altogether under-estimating the tremendous interest that was being taken by the working men of the country in this question. They were thoroughly ashamed of the spectacle of a workman out of employment, trudging about the streets, ragged and fringed, going down to his own destruction. They believed that the people of the country would support them in asking that the House should lend every energy it had, and use every power at its disposal, to remove that stain and that disgrace from our Christianity and our civilisation.

Question proposed, "That this Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. MADDISON (Burnley) rose to move an Amendment, to the effect that the House, while ready to consider any practical proposal for dealing with the evil of unemployment, could not entertain a measure which, by wasting the resources of the nation, would throw out of work more persons than it could assist, and would destroy the power of organised labour, but hoped that the Government would give immediate consideration to the recommendations in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Commission, so far as they dealt with unemployment. He agreed at once, he said, as to the importance of this question. The mover of the Bill had expressed a kind of regret that his hon. friend the Member for Preston was not in the place which he now occupied, and had described the hon. Gentleman as "the leader of lost causes." He regretted that the hon. Member had said that, because a Radical should be the last to twit people with lost causes. The independence of Poland was a lost and dead cause, but he would sooner be a defeated Pole than a victorious Russian. The short-lived Republic of Rome was a lost cause, but he would sooner be a Mazzini than a Napoleon. The hon. Member for Leicester had said that some of them thought that Socialists lived in Heaven. He confessed that he had never associated Socialism with Heaven. He wanted to admit — and it was an admission which he believed was common to every man who opposed this Bill—the gravity of the evil of unemployment. It was exaggerated, often very grossly exaggerated, and, if necessary, he could show that unemployment had been very much worse in our own country than at present, and it certainly was as bad and sometimes worse in other countries. He agreed entirely with what had been said about the fate of the unemployed man. Of course, a rather realistic picture had been drawn by the hon. Member for Leicester, but in ordinary experience they would have to modify it a little [" No "] among some trades which worked by the hour. They would not, for instance, paint such a picture of a joiner because he was out of employment a day or two. He thoroughly agreed that nothing worse could come to a man. His experience of unemployment, he was glad to say, was a limited one, but it lasted long enough to have burnt into him for all time the misery and despair which came over men from prolonged terms of unemployment. The opponents of the Bill were just as anxious and just as well equipped to assist in the solution of the problem of unemployment as hon. Members opposite. He was a little sick of the notion that the Labour Party, and especially the Socialist section of it, had a monopoly of sympathy with the unemployed. He denied the monopoly of sympathy, and especially the monopoly of knowledge. It was no qualification to sit with the Labour Party that a man must be a labourer. An employer could go there. It would be as well if they wiped away the myth which had grown up in this Parliament that knowledge of labour matters and sympathy rested with hon. Members opposite exclusively. The hon. Member for Leicester, speaking in his own constituency the other night, had said he was very anxious to divide the sheep from the goats. That was exactly what he (Mr. Maddison) desired, because they on that side happened to be the sheep and they would be very glad to see how many goats there were. The problem was not a simple one, and he would expect the hon. Member for Leicester, unlike some of his more reckless friends, to admit that. It was a complex question. The causes of unemployment were varied and obviously the remedies for it must be equally various. Unfitness came into this problem on all hands. There was the physically unfit man, there was the technically unfit man, and there was the morally unfit man, who was the despair of this problem. He could not help saying that Socialists did great harm to their own cause—though with that he had no concern; the more they injured it the better it was from his point of view. But when a man, holding a position in that House, went about the country and played with this great question and pandered to the thoughtless and the thriftless and the demoralised, he said to them they would help to solve this problem far better by talking sense outside than by bringing nonsense inside this House. Let him quote the hon. Member for Colne Valley, the one and only Socialist in the House who ran up the Socialist flag and did not get in under the trade union flag. The hon. Member went to his (Mr. Maddison's) constituency and, referring to the poverty of people, used these words—

> "It is wonderful to me to think they have not got drunk, and if they have got drunk after paying for their fuel and provender I think they ought to be given credit for extremely good finance."

Was that the way to emancipate the workmen, to go to them in their misery, with their lax moral grip and lack of stamina, and tell them in a joking, laughing way that if they had got drunk they were good chancellors of the exchequer of their own affairs? It was not that way that progress came. What was the remedy that hon. Members offered? To begin with, as people usually did who attempted to bring the millennium within a year or two, the two pioneers were already at loggerheads. The hon. Member for St. Pancras, who, with more courage than discretion, had stepped into this conflict, had used some very strange words. For instance, trade unionists opposite must have been very much amused with his statement about the electrification of trams, the laying down of roads, the building of the County Council palace, when he said that these were questions that trade unions could not grip. When he knew more about trade unionism he would know that some of the best unions were those which had actually unskilled labourers. It must not be said that trade unionism had no control over unskilled labour, though he regretted that they had not more control. The more they got hold of unskilled labour to organise it the more they had his sympathy. The hon. Member for St. Pancras, in a light, airy way, coming out of his sublime innocence, said he was inclined to give up the mere trifle contained in the Bill of the right to work. But the hon. Member for Leicester, who had a heavy mortgage on him from the Socialist side, had to clear himself of that at once. The hon. Member was dumfounded at the thought of giving up the right to work. That, according to him, was the thing they had to assert. He hoped his hon. friend saw now how completely he was given up by the comrades, and he hoped Members on that side would have taken in the full import of that. They were not concerned now with machinery here and details there. He hoped the House and the Government too, realised, that they were concerned with a great principle, which was the stock-in-trade of Socialist agitation, which was preached especially on Sunday, when other people were at morning or evening service. Up and down the country men were being told—some of them, through no fault of their own, ignorant men—that there was a way by which everybody could get work, and nobody could be out of work. That was the meaning of the right to work. That was the question that was before the House in this Bill. Let that be given up, and nothing else was any use. In its present form the Bill was unfit to go to a Committee. In a mutilated form it was not worthy of sending to a Committee. That was the issue that had to be faced. Let them just look at the Bill as it really was, not covered with fine phrases, picturing in thrilling voice the terrible plight of the unemployed. He wondered if the hon. Member for Barnard Castle was a subscriber to the doctrine of the right to work.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON: Certainly.

***Mr. MADDISON** said all he could say was that the hon. Member had travelled a long distance in a very short time, because he had spent a good deal of time in the constituency he now represented in denouncing up hill and down dale the very doctrine which he had now been driven to admit.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON: You have gone back.

Mr. MADDISON said if the hon. Member could point out to him any time when he had any such lapse in his reason as to be a Socialist he would apologise. He wondered whether the hon. Member for Leicester really believed in the Bill. The hon. Member took a very isolated position about a certain Bill dealing with sweated industries. The Trade Union Congress was against him, the Labour Party was against him, everybody else was against him, he stood alone, and he thought he stood with a good deal of economic solidity. It was difficult to say if he really believed in the Bill. The temperature of the hon. Member's Socialism was subject to violent fluctuations. It rose from zero in that House, and at Leicester, in an ascending scale through public meetings up to boiling-point at International Socialist Congresses. He was assured that at the Stuttgart Congress he was really a terrible person. He had read some of his speeches. He hoped they had not got to this country, because he was quite sure the hon. Member's association with Dives would be cut off. This Bill was the first-fruits of the Socialist agitation. There was a very interesting circular floating about the House from the Independent Labour Party, which he had not unfortunately been able to get hold of—it was his misfortune that he had so few friends across the road—in which the Party announced that this was the first step—a necessary step, an inevitable step—to Socialism. Trade unionists did not want this Bill at all. But apart from trade unions altogether, this Bill had a very interesting evolution. Socialism last year was getting into a bad way, because hon. Members opposite in the opinion of their friends outside, were making an awful mess of it, and something had to be done. Here was what Mr. Russell Smart wrote in the *Labour Leader*—

> "The policy the party has pursued this session is identifying it with the Radicals. The average man who has no eye for nice distinctions is beginning to look on it as the advanced guard of the Liberals. Already we see signs of a Tory reaction. If the Labour Party accepts Macdonald's fatal guidance it will share in the general disaster."

That general disaster had got to be averted, and this Bill was intended to avert it. This Bill had afforded rich material for the orations of many hon. Members opposite on the Labour Benches. He sympathised with any little defects in the drafting, and he hoped no apology would be made for any little slips. With the "right to work" principle contained in it, he was not very much troubled about a comma, because this principle was being put forward as the matured product of people who believed they had found in it a remedy for the unemployed problem. Clause 3 of the Bill provided that everyone was to be provided with work. There had been considerable difference of opinion as to whether that work was to be provided at the standard rate of wages, and this all depended upon the insertion of a comma in the clause. He wanted to know if the trade-union rate of wages was meant. What rate of wages was going to be paid? How would it affect the building trade? Were all the building schemes mentioned under this Bill to be carried out at trade-union rates? The first question that suggested itself was: How were the workers so employed to be paid? According to the hon. Member for Leicester, wages paid under the scheme would not be at the trade-union rate. If that were so, the Bill would have the effect of depressing wages, and against that he protested as a trade unionist. In fact, the Bill would be far less serious if the trade-union rates of wages were provided by it, though it would be open to criticism from another point of view. Then came the important question: What was the work to be? Were the promoters of the Bill going to put unemployed boilermakers to ploughing? If they did, he would advise them not to stand very near them. Would they put weavers, whose hands were as delicate as a woman's, to the hard work of making drains? The hon. Member for St. Pancras said he would not discuss economics. It was true that economics had very little to do with the Bill. He said that there was the Consolidated Fund Bill with which they could do almost anything they liked, but he would remind the hon. Member that somebody had to pay for it, and those who would have to pay the most were the working classes. It must be obvious that to provide work they would have to fall back upon land schemes. Of all the fallacies that prevailed in the House, and they were many, the most ridiculous was that the cultivation of land required no skill. ["Hear, hear."] "Put the people back on the land" was now the great cry. He was a compositor, and he would sooner go to gaol than go on the land. Indeed, he thought he would serve his country better in gaol than on the land. He was an advocate of putting the people on the land, but they must be the right people. There was no way in which money could be lost more quickly than on the land. He was all in favour of going back to the land, but it was a luxury he always passed on to other people. He wanted to see the proper people placed on the land. There were tens of thousands of such people in this country, but the Bill would do nothing for them. It would put on the land people who ought never to be there, and would mean ruinous and disastrous land schemes. The hon. Member for Leicester had said that the Joint Board and Parliamentary Committee of the Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour Party had drafted this Bill. He held the Report of that Committee in his hand, and he challenged anybody to get up and cite one single sentence which justified the basic principle of this Bill, which was the right to work. What was the fact? They laid down that two things seemed to be necessary: "(1) To use all our efforts to prevent a decrease in the demand for labour; (2) to meet any decrease which may occur by decreasing the working hours per day or per week, instead of, as at present, decreasing the number of workers employed." The whole plea of the Report was an appeal to trade unionists to stop systematic overtime, so that when employment shrank the hours should shrink also, rather than turn the poor fellows out of work. There was no discrimination in the Bill. Let them take the penal clause. He was not prepared to place the poorest at the tender mercies of the local authority and unpaid magistrates as this Bill proposed. The question would have to be dealt with in a far more careful manner than that. If they put a watchmaker to digging a drain, and he refused to do the work on the ground that he was unfitted for it, would they send him to a penal colony? [LABOUR cries of "Read the Bill."]

MR. ALDEN (holding up a copy of the Bill): Read the clause. [Cries of "Order!"]

*MR. MADDISON: My hon. friend is rather excited. There is great danger in excitement.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON: There is greater danger in making wild statements.

MR. MADDISON: I am surprised to hear that from the hon. Member. I thought the danger to a cause lay in considered statements.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow) made a remark which did not reach the Press Gallery.

*MR. MADDISON: The hon. Member for Jarrow must be excused as he is used to going to Socialist congresses, where there are no manners. ["Oh, oh!"] The right to work could not stand alone. It was his misfortune to have to read a great deal of Socialist literature; and he thought he knew what Socialists were thinking about. If the right to work were admitted, it must be followed up by giving the State—upon whom the burden of providing the work would be placed—a control over the lives of the workers, to which no self-respecting people would submit. Writing of the Socialist State in his work, "Socialism and the Family," Mr. H. G. Wells said—

> "The State will pay for children born legitimately in the marriage it will sanction. A woman with healthy and successful offspring will draw a wage for each one of them from the State so long as they go on well. It will be her wage. Under the State she will control her child's upbringing. How far the husband will share in the power of direction is a matter of detail upon which opinion may vary—and does vary very widely among Socialists."

He asked the House to pause before they accepted the flimsy thing called the right to work, because when it was established the State must undertake all the functions foreshadowed by Mr. Wells. There was a rich domain of social reform, on which the House might enter with safety and to the advantage of the masses of the people. But that solid ground must not be confused with the treacherous morass of State Socialism—the grave of individual liberty and of national strength. This Bill, with all its crudeness and absurdities, invited Parliament to raise hopes which could not be fulfilled, and, in the name of the unemployed, to decrease employment and to strike a fatal blow at organised labour. Such a Bill did not deserve the support of this ancient House. He begged to move.

*MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead), in seconding the Amendment, said he might fairly state that he had no want of sympathy with those who had brought in this Bill—sympathy with their motive and object. The work that he had been engaged in for many years justified him in making that observation. They were not to-day discussing whether there was an unemployed problem. On that point they were practically in agreement. What they had to consider was whether the Bill now before the House was a remedy for that evil. He submitted that they could not consider this measure merely as a debating society, but must have regard to the fact that they were responsible politicians. He listened to the whole of the speech of the hon. Member for Leicester, and he did not find a single word in it which went to prove that this Bill was a remedy for the evil in regard to which he so eloquently pleaded. He believed he could agree with nearly every word in that speech, though he could not have made it so eloquently. The problem before the House was not merely whether certain shreds of the Bill might come through the discussion in Committee upstairs and be translated into a statute, but whether the main principles of the Bill deserved the approval of the House. Further, they had to consider whether in the circumstances it was wise for this House to approve of a measure of this sort within a few months of a Report being presented to the House by a Commission appointed by Parliament, one of whose duties was to report on this problem on the evidence submitted to it, and to make suggestions as to the remedies they ought to apply. Apart from the question whether the Bill was right or wrong, he held that it was unbusiness-like and unwise to pass a measure which would crystallise a certain type of machinery, all over the country for dealing with this problem when the Report of the Commission and the evidence might prove to the House that this particular machinery was unwise, and its methods fallacious. He asked those hon. Members who favoured the Bill to answer that question, and to say whether from the business standpoint they ought to proceed with it. If this Bill passed into law, he submitted that one of its first effects would be to intensify the evil. What would happen to begin with? It was proposed to create in all borough councils and county councils an unemployed committee. These committees, if they were to take their work seriously, must appoint officials to administer the work, to draw up the necessary schemes, and to make the necessary reports. One of the first effects, therefore, would be to saddle the local life with the cost of a very large number of permanent offficals whose salaries would immediately be withdrawn from productive labour and become a burden on the rates and taxes of the country. Before a penny was available for making employment there would be withdrawn from the fund that gave employment tens of thousands of pounds for the salaries of officials. Their duty would be to provide work suitable to the needs of the individual applicant for any or all workmen who registered themselves as unemployed or other employment "upon conditions not lower than those that are standard in the locality," and failing this the Committee were to provide maintenance. If the unemployed workmen showed any disinclination to follow the work provided, they might be detained for a period not exceeding six months. Was there a Member ber of this House clothed and in his right mind, who had the faintest acquaintance with human nature, economics, and industrial life, who believed that these proposals, which formed the heart of the Bill, were a practical remedy for the evil of unemployment? He doubted whether a single person could be found who believed that. The mover of the Bill himself had practically offered to withdraw the substance of the Bill, and surely no one would accuse him of being wanting in sympathy in connection with this question. Even the hon. Member for Leicester, although he boldly defended the main principles of the Bill, frequently apologised for the bad draughtsmanship, and that, in itself, suggested that he was not quite sure of his ground. It was true he did not go so far as the hon. Member for St. Pancras. If the Bill was not a remedy—and it was admitted it was not—why should they vote for it? He had spoken with many Members who intended to vote for the Bill, but in no single case had they been able to defend it or its main principles. There were two reasons given for voting for it. One was that they had been worried by trade unionists in their constituency to support the Bill. The other was that they were so full of sympathy with the unemployed and so struck by the evil around them, that they felt they must vote for something. He submitted that that was trifling with their responsibility as legislators and their constituents had a right to claim that Members should take their work in the House more seriously than that. Let them follow the Bill in practical working. He submitted that they ought to have in defence of the Bill a very different class of argument from that to which they had yet listened. They had merely listened to a plea that the House should do something. Surely, they must show the House, first of all, roughly or approximately what such a measure was going to land the country into in the shape of finance. No board of directors, not even a parish council, would pass such a measure without some calculation and estimate of the financial side of it, and what it was going to let the country in for. They ought to have some information of the work that was to be found under the Bill. [AN HON. MEMBER: What do we pay the Government for?] Every Member of the House had his share of responsibility for the Government, and he refused to press upon any Government a mere abstract idea unless he was able to back it up with the support of his own intelligence and conscience. The Government consisted of men like themselves, and they had no right to expect the Government to work miracles when they could not work miracles themselves. Let him take his own town of Birkenhead. First they were to have a costly officialism appointed. Suppose there was depression in the shipbuilding industry, they would have shipwrights, pattern makers, and joiners out of work. What had the Bill to say for these men? There was no Member on the other side of the House who had more sympathy with his constituents out of work than he had himself, and his constituents knew it. What had the Bill to say for them? Fortunately, they had some information given to them by one of the ablest and one of the most sincere and public spirited supporters of the Bill, the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow. There was no supporter of the Bill whom he held more in respect. What had he to say? He was largely responsible for the resolution he had received from the trade union branches in his constituency urging him to support the Bill. Here in the hon. Member's monthly Circular was a summary of the Bill, and then he came to the peroration—

> "It will be no answer to be told that profitable work cannot be found if this Bill is passed. There are many projects which would not be profitable to the individual and which could not be so because not realisable in the life of an individual, but which would be profitable to the State. Such are undertakings for afforestation, land reclamation, coast protection, and for the first time these would cease to be discussed as mere abstractions but would be discussed as simple practical proposals, the means and the agencies having been set up for carrying them into effect."

Mr. Vivian.

Again, he says—

> "There is imported every year into this country dairy produce of the value of £50,000,000, and it will be the duty of those responsible for the carrying out of the Act to devise ways and means whereby this can be raised on our own shores."

His hon. friend the mover of the Bill, and the hon. Member for Leicester, had not the courage of the hon. Member for the Blackfrairs Division. They did not dare to go into any question of this sort. He had not found anyone who could show how this Bill would find employment for the unemployed. What was the position of the men who had been influenced by the hon. Member's circular. Some of them had never seen the Bill. The hon. Member for the Clitheroe Division had spoken of trade unions supporting this measure. He refused to accept the statement that trade unions intelligently supported the measure, unless the arguments both for and against had been put before them by men who understood the case, so that the trade unions could form an intelligent conclusion. The Party opposite, he admitted, had the opportunity of entrance to the trade union branches more than some of them had. [AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: Hear, hear.] Yes, but he submitted that it was in the interest of all parties that the citizens of this country should have an opportunity of reasoning on all questions which came before the public. An attempt to force legislation, which was merely the result of a bias and the result of pressure from headquarters, would not go down with him as the matured opinion of the working classes of this country. Did the hon. Member mean to tell him that afforestation, land reclamation, or dairy farming would be better carried out under this Bill? What had this Bill to do with such proposals as the creation of suitable authorities to deal with afforestation, land reclamation, and dairy farming? Had the hon. Member informed his union and the men of the other unions that there was already a Commission of which one of his own Party was a member, appointed to report on such matters as afforestation, coast erosion, and land reclamation? Had the hon.

Member any brilliant ideas of a practical character on these subjects? If so, would it not be better to get the representative of his Party to bring those ideas before the Commissions and have them properly discussed? Or did he only wish to discuss them as abstract ideas? [AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: Hear, hear.] An hon. Member said "Hear, hear." Well, it was to be hoped that he would bring his proposals down to something practical. He asked what it was that hon. Gentlemen opposite had to offer to the shipwrights, joiners and engineers of Birkenhead? During a great depression in the shipping industry would this Bill be a remedy for unemployment? Was he to understand that these men were to be offered work, should he say, in North Wales, on mountain tops planting trees: or were they to go driving wheel-barrows filled with mud and stones on some out-of-the-way part of the coast reclaiming land? Had hon. Members opposite no other work to offer as a remedy for unemployment in connection with this Bill? [AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: Ask the President.] Yes, but this was the proposal of hon. Gentlemen opposite, not that of the President. It was the matured opinion of one of the ablest men in their Party, embodied in the peroration of the circular to the unions. It was no remedy for the Birkenhead shipwrights, joiners, and engineers, who were thrown out of work during a depression in the shipbuilding industry, to say that they should go out planting trees or reclaiming land. First, it would break up their homes and their families, and all that that meant. Second, afforestation was skilled work or at least must be carried on continuously, and a man would be unfitted to go back to shipbuilding if he were taken away from it for months to plant trees or drive wheelbarrows. It must be remembered, too, that in a boom nearly every great trade in the country demanded practically all the skilled operatives they could obtain. That might not be understood by everyone. He spoke with a knowledge of his own trade, and he thought there were present members of other trades who would agree with him that in boom years every great trade required all the skilled operatives that were available. [AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: No.] He insisted that in boom years there was practically no surplus labour in the skilled trades. If that were so, and his statement was substantially correct, what was the shipbuilding trade to do in the boom time, when a fair percentage of its skilled men had been taken away into other professions and occupations by this Bill? How was the necessary skilled labour to be supplied? Then in regard to the extraordinary proposal that the joiners, engineers, and shipwrights of Birkenhead should go into dairy-farming: it was difficult to take that seriously. Did hon. Gentlemen opposite seriously suggest that the skilled operatives of Birkenhead should go into dairy farming in order to produce the fifty million pounds' worth of dairy produce which was imported into this country from Denmark and other places abroad? What about the free trade argument that we pay for those imports by exports; that we cannot have their custom unless we are their customers? The more the Bill was examined, the more it was seen how impossible it was to think of its being carried into practical effect. He was a great believer in experiments. He believed it was only by experiments that they could prove what it was possible to do with human nature. Dogmatism would not do nowadays. They had got beyond that. The age of miracle and dogma was past. They must be able to prove what they could do with human beings by experience. He asked his hon. friends opposite, could they give a single example drawn from the experience of, he did not care how many centuries back, of schemes that approximated in any degree to the proposals contained in this Bill, that had been a success; he indeed went further, and would say had not these been melancholy failures? They had failed to achieve the very object which their promoters had in view. Surely, before they made a revolution in dealing with this problem of unemployment they ought to have some evidence that it was even likely to succeed. In regard to the fifty millions' worth of dairy produce imported into this country, he asked what had become of the Small Holdings Act? Was it a dead letter? Did his hon. friend the Member for Blackfriars Division not know of that Act? He voted for it and avowed that the whole purpose of it was to stimulate the growth of agricultural produce and to get people divorced from the land back to it. He maintained that they should not, under the guise of an Unemployed Bill, attempt to deal with a question with which the Bill had nothing to do. He hoped that before they went to a division they would have from the promoters of the Bill some additions to the proposals for putting the unemployed to afforestation, land reclamation, and dairy farming—some addition to the list of jobs on which the unemployed might be engaged—otherwise the whole thing was a perfect farce. [Dissent from the LABOUR Benches.] He contended that the recommendations contained in the peroration of the hon. Member for Blackfriars in his circular to the trade unions would be admitted by a vast majority in the House as a perfect farce in relation to this Bill and in relation to the problem with which they were now dealing. [An HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: It is not a farce.] They were entitled to have some other suggestions from hon. Members opposite as to the work to be undertaken by the unemployed committees. In regard to the effect of the Bill upon unemployment he asked his friend opposite and those who were inclined to support this Bill in the House, to show where the money was to come from to start those new industries. All the money spent by the Government or the local authorities must first of all be collected by means of rates and taxes from the people. All the money spent by the Corporation of Birkenhead on the unemployed must first be collected from the ratepayers of Birkenhead. Would a single stroke of employment be provided by collecting money from the artisans of Birkenhead who were on the rate-books and handing it over to an incompetent committee to waste on some madcap scheme from which the contributing ratepayers would not get half-a-crown's worth for every £1 they spent? He asked how that could add one day's work and to the demand for labour in this country? The ratepayers should be allowed to spend their money in a normal way, providing the necessaries of life and boots and clothes for themselves and their children. Was he to understand that in order to meet the unemployment of one class in the community, and that not always the best class—he admitted that there were frequently men of the best class unemployed through no fault of their own—they were to burden the industrious workman still more than at present? He believed that such a proposition was monstrous so far as it affected the industrious workmen. Moreover, such a scheme would be no solution of the problem of unemployment. This Bill would have the effect of creating a large mass of workpeople who would be detached from their unions. These men would be caught by the Free Labour Associations who would be glad to utilise them for their own ends. He maintained that the Bill would be a blow to trade unions. Were they then to fall back on nothing? [An HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: Fall back on a fine job.] The interruption was meaningless to him, for he thought he had dealt fairly with the points which had been raised. He came to what he felt were helpful suggestions in regard to this question of unemployment. First of all, they must bear in mind that our industries on the whole required all the skilled labour available in times of boom, and therefore, the problem was to deal with depression period. He would ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he could not do something at any rate to improve our system of labour exchanges and perfect the registration of the unemployed, so as to render labour more mobile. These matters were at present, he knew, organised to some extent, but they were very inefficiently organised and not in the hands of experts and those who could make the most of them. [A LABOUR MEMBER: The hon. Member for Burnley does not agree with you.] His hon. friend the Member for Burnley and himself probably disagreed on many things. They represented themselves, and were not the echoes of someone else.

MR. MADDISON said he thought the hon. Member opposite was too ready in interpreting a gesture. He was not expressing disagreement.

*Mr. VIVIAN said that he would ask the representative of the Local Government Board whether he would not also consider the importance of organising and concentrating information some time ahead of works to be undertaken by public bodies, such as docks, roads, streets, libraries and public buildings generally, dividing them into the categories of those which were urgent and those which were less urgent, and the different degrees to which they might be deferred. Public authorities all over the country had control over an enormous amount of expenditure, and he would like to know if the right hon. Gentleman would seek to organise a system whereby such works should, within reasonable limits, be pressed or retarded according to the state of the labour market, as shown by the Board of Trade's Returns. If something was done in that direction it would enable men to obtain employment during a slack time, and do something to check the ebb of labour in depression by creating demands for labour at times when the ordinary industries of the country were slacking off. Would the right hon. Gentleman consider whether a special officer of his Department might not be told off to consider and report from time to time on improvement works, which, though quite sound as to their utility and cost if the long view was taken, would not be of sufficient immediate gain to attract private capital or to claim the attention of a local body? Again, he would ask whether the President of the Local Government Board could not see his way to keep in touch with large employers of labour, with a view to arriving at some systematic arrangement of the hours of labour during slack times? It was no solution merely to reduce the hours to a rigid number, because that did not deal with the oscillation or movement of trade. They must have adjustments in order to equalise the sacrifices made by the operatives. Could not the right hon. Gentleman, in times of severe depression, such as the present, call together representatives of employers and workmen in some of the larger trades and confer with them as to the possibility of lessening the hours of work. For instance, in the building trade, which employed 1,000,000 men in the country, in time of depression there was no systematic arrangement for reducing the hours when the unemployed were shown by the Board of Trade Returns to be excessive. They would by this process have the sacrifice scattered over a wider area, and in that way many thousands of men could be absorbed during depressed times, and then when the revival came these men would be more fit than they were now, after having been unemployed and walking the streets. This was not always practicable, he was aware, but, speaking from experience, he said it was not done on anything like the scale on which it ought to be done. He was interested in and presided over schemes in which 400 building trade operatives were employed, and he would be willing to discuss such a scheme; he was quite certain that if the question were dealt with in that way they would solve the difficulty to some extent and absorb a number of men who would be otherwise unemployed. He would also like to see more organised efforts in our great trades during good times to create insurance funds and reserve funds upon which the workers and their families could live in bad times. That was one way in which the problem could be partly met. The great evil was that now the moment a great depression came in some industries they had a large percentage of their men out of work; it was not merely that they suffered from the fact that they were penniless themselves and without spending power, but they passed on the depression to other industries of which they were customers and buyers, and thus they had unemployment increasing with a cumulative force, and, as a consequence, the whole of the industries of the country were affected. At the present moment the profits of some of our great industries went in too great a degree to millionaires and well-to-do people, and he agreed with the protest of the Labour Party against some of the effects of the present industrial system, but he did not agree that the Bill which had been brought orward was a remedy. He agreed with them in their protests that a larger share of profits belonged to the workers in our great trades, and should be utilised as reserve funds and insurance against times of depression. The men then could not only keep themselves fit but continue to be customers in other trades, and such action would check the depression spreading to other industries. He submitted that there was nothing in this Bill tending in that direction, while none of the suggestions he had made smacked of artificiality. They were in harmony with normal forces, and merely involved the more perfect regulation of those forces. The problem of unemployment was many sided, and he agreed with his hon. friend the Member for Burnley, that there was no specific remedy. He believed, after spending many years of his life in studying it, that the solution of the unemployed problem was not going to come entirely through Unemployed Bills, but through a better organised condition of things being brought about by dozens of other measures and causes, such as Education and Temperance Bills, individual and collective thrift, co-operative action between employer and workmen on such matters as reserve funds, joint action between the Local Government Board and public authorities in the matter of public works and in dealing with the distribution of workmen, and practical, not abstract proposals for land improvement, afforestation and other schemes. They should at least have some practical recommendations given to them by the Commission which had been appointed on these matters. He had given some of the best years of his life to the consideration of this problem, not only as a student of history, but in the field of practical experiment. For nearly twenty years he had been making practical experiments, and had taken risks and responsibilities and endeavoured to learn from those experiments. He had studied this question not merely from books—he believed there were very few books on this subject worth reading—but from human nature which was well worth reading. He had endeavoured to understand human nature. He would briefly, in conclusion, illustrate his objection to this Bill in another way by drawing upon personal experience. When he came to London twenty years ago he was little more than eighteen years of age. It came over him that he might be sick, and that was a trouble to him, and before he got a job he joined a friendly society, of which he had been a member ever since. The next fear which assailed him was that he might be unemployed, and so as soon as he became of age he joined his trade union as an insurance against unemployment, and had remained a member ever since. But supposing this Bill had been in force twenty years ago, when he came to London some of his mates would have got hold of him and said: "There is no necessity for your forethought in joining a friendly society or a trade union, for you have only to register your name in an office at the London County Council and either employment or keep will be assured to you." If that was the kind of impression that could be made on the minds of the young men and the youth of our country coming into our industrial system, if it was to be brought home to them, as some of their hon. friends opposite flagrantly admitted, that there was no need for foresight, and they regarded as enemies of their propaganda a workman who acquired capital and made provision for a rainy day, he protested against it, and said that the result would be to discourage men, making provision themselves for the future. The great test by which this scheme and all schemes for advancing human society must be judged was its effect on character. What attitude of mind would it stimulate in large masses of workpeople? Would it tend to increase the number of self-reliant, alert human beings? To the degree to which they inculcated the idea that an individual's salvation could come from anything apart from his own energy, forethought, and sense of duty, and self-sacrifice, they weakened national life. By this Bill they were not making work, but they would destroy the character, the self-reliance, and the moral fibre of the men of the country. The Bill would, in his opinion, if it became law, waste capital, lower wages, weaken trade unions, intensify unemployment, and prove so disastrous generally that not only would it, and all connected with it, be swept away by a disgusted public of taxpayers and ratepayers, but the country's heart would be so hardened that promising schemes for dealing with the evil would go down with the wreck of this Bill. He appealed to the House not to destroy the chance of progress by building up a structure which even its advocates believed to be wrong, for the truth was that there was no man in the House who defended the Bill, and those who would vote for it did not believe in its principle. That being so he asked the House to reject it.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all after the word 'that' and to insert the words 'this House, while ready to consider any practical proposal for dealing with the evil of unemployment, cannot entertain a measure which, by wasting the resources of the nation, would throw out of work more persons than it could assist and would destroy the power of organised labour, but hopes that the Government will give immediate consideration to the recommendations in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Commission so far as they deal with unemployment.' "—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) said he would not have interposed in the discussion had it not been for the fact that two hon. friends, with whom he usually acted, had moved and seconded in most eloquent speeches the Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for Burnley. He had been deeply impressed that the whole trend of their opinion was the idea that trade unions could only exist and prosper upon the misery of their fellow-men. If he had the right to speak at all in the House, or outside of it, it was as a trade unionist, and if he for one moment thought that anything in connection with this Bill would reduce or weaken either the dignity or independence of the trade unions of Great Britain he would quite as strongly as his hon. friends have opposed the Bill. But it was because he was persuaded that, whatever might be its faults in detail, the Bill contained a principle which was the rallying ground of all reformers who wished to deal with the unemployed problem in a way which would carry hope into the homes of the people, and produce a condition of things different from that which existed at the present time, that he should support it. No one who had studied the question would think for a moment that such a Bill was going to solve the whole problem of the unemployed. It was not intended to solve the problem of the unemployed, but it was simply intended, as he read and understood it, to deal with the evil or the result of unemployment. The Government claimed, in connection with their Small Holdings Act and other Acts of Parliament which they had projected, that they proposed to deal with the unemployed problem at its source, and in proportion to the success of their schemes for solving the unemployed question at its source would the necessity for this Bill disappear, but it was because the progress of the solution of the problem was so slow, necessarily so slow, that they wanted to have a Bill of this kind made into an Act of Parliament, which would make the people wait with hope for the solution of that problem which had puzzled some of the mightiest intellects in the country. What they really wanted was not negative criticism at all, but a positive gospel of hope. It would be perhaps more easy for him to get up and offer destructive criticism on any Bill than to state the case in its favour. It was always easier to criticise than to create, and to offer negative criticism against this Bill was not a sufficient answer to the necessity for dealing with the unemployed problem in the present hopeless position of the unemployed. He was was not speaking as a Socialist, because he was not a Socialist, but as a trade unionist and as a citizen, and it was because he held that the unemployed was a citizen's question beyond all others that he said it was the duty of the House unanimously to co-operate in the production of an Act of Parliament which would deal with the problem much more effectively than it had yet been dealt with. His hon. friend the Member for Burnley had talked about thriftlessness. He did not like the term at all. It was an offence to him to talk about thrift in the case of a man who tramped about wearing his boots off his feet, looking for employment. A man could not be thrifty on nothing. The Bill was not one to deal with people who could be thrifty, but to deal with the unfortunate people who could not help themselves. He was deeply impressed with the appeal for someone to come forward to defend the principle of the Bill, and without exaggeration, without passion, he would like to tell the House of Commons that he firmly believed in the principle that a man had a right to work. He saw nothing wrong about it at all. It seemed to him the first principle in a great Commonwealth like Great Britain to afford a man the right to work. It was only in proportion as they gave men the right to work, and enabled them to earn a livelihood for themselves and families, that they could hope to build up a sober and self-respecting nation. If anything demoralised a man more than all else, it was to be out of employment day after day. If they wanted to keep men straight, and reduce the temptation to drink, give them the right to work, let them feel that they had an opportunity of keeping themselves out of debt. No one could realise what it was for a man to feel that he had reached the stage of hopelessness. The only thing that made men thrifty and provident and striving was the belief that the opportunity was open to them to rear their families in comfort, and to provide for themselves in the autumn of their days. If they took away that hope and that belief, they destroyed the great driving force in the nation and in human life, and it was that that hope might be given to men who were thrown out of employment that the Bill was projected and they hoped the House would accept it and at any rate send it to a Committee. His two hon. friends who had spoken were deeply interested in co-operation, and he marvelled at their attitude in connection with this Bill, remembering how sincerely in earnest they were over co-operation. What was the basis of co-operation? Not a credit sytsem, but a cash system. How could they hope to build up a co-operative system unless they gave men the right to work, and earn money to go into the market to purchase what they required? Without the right to work, families were reared on the credit system, and children whose parents had been compelled to get into debt in their early days had been men and women before their fathers and mothers had been out of debt. To understand this problem, one must have lived it or in it; if they had all lived in it there would be a tremendous passion in the House for such a Bill, and it was so that they might appeal to the best Members in the House outside of party altogether that the Bill had been proposed and the discussion initiated. His friend the hon. Member for Birkenhead had spoken about the problem not being so acute as some people thought. If he knew the figures for his own particular trade, he would be a bold man to say that. Taking the whole of the carpenters and joiners, the percentage of unemployed now was not less than 13 per cent., and in Sunderland alone it was not less than 14 per cent. Those figures staggered one. He would not stand in the House of Commons and speak a word for the man who was an habitual loafer; the trade union movement had not been built for loafers; he spoke for the men who could not help themselves. In his own division there were out of employment hundreds of men with high moral characters, highly-skilled, with respectable homes and families. Those were the men who wanted help, and when hon. Members said that the passing of this Bill would injure workmen and employers, he was afraid they did not quite discern the underlying problem at stake. What the Bill proposed was not that those men should be allowed to drift, but that the municipality, helped by the State, should make it possible for them to keep their homes going, waiting for the waves of depression to pass. What was the alternative? They drifted and became demoralised; they lost their skill, and as the hon. Member for Woolwich said earlier this year—

> "You may do something with a man who has been idle for three months, but you will do nothing with a man who has been idle for two years You have demoralised him. He has no hope at all."

He believed that this Bill would do something to deal with that side of the problem. Something had been said about the clause that dealt with men who would not work; but he supposed that if they asked for money for such men there would be complaints, and because they said they were prepared to make men work that also was wrong. When an appeal was made for the maintenance of the dignity and independence of the British workman he said: "Hear, hear"; but when upon that was based the argument that this Bill would put into prison self-respecting British workmen, he came to the conclusion that the speaker had not read the clause at all. Deliberate and habitual disinclination to work was the real cause that would send a man to prison. If a watchmaker was offered work for which he was physically unfit it would be accepted as a legitimate excuse. He begged the House to face the main issue. That issue was that a man had the right to work. He was not a Socialist, but he was a believer in the future of the British workman, and it was because he was profoundly convinced that they would add a new dignity and a new hope to human life for all workmen that he so strongly supported the principle of the right to work embodied in the Bill. Was it not better for the House to pass a Bill to give a man the right to work than to pauperise him? They were not allowed to starve him outright if he cared to appeal for poor relief. So long as he was prepared to lose all dignity and self-respect, they would feed him. And that was all that was proposed in this Bill. If the municipality, helped by the State, could not find employment, they must find him food; but without his giving up all the rights of citizenship in so doing and without his having to undergo all the belittling processes of pauperism. He went there as a right, as a member of the State. Was it not infinitely better for the House of Commons to project measures of law which would help to make men strong, independent, bold, dignified, and filled with self-respect, rather than to allow them to drift, saying that if they wanted relief they must depend upon the charity of their friends or apply for parish relief? It was because he knew a large number of men needing such assistance, and that the yearning desire of their souls was to be helped and not pauperised, that he stood without hesitation and accepted fully, with all its responsibilities, the principle that a man who could not get employment himself had the right to go to the State to save him from going under. The majesty of the Empire had been a lot talked about. The reason why Rome was destroyed was not because of its lack of intellectual capacity, but because of its failure to realise the needs and requirements of the poor people, and it was because he was persuaded that the majesty and greatness of Britain depended, not upon the few millionaires, but upon the standard of comfort and hope in the cottage homes of the people, that he backed this Bill and stood for the principle of the right to work.

*MR. HEMMERDE (Denbighshire, E.) said it was no easy task for one who sat for a constituency that was entirely industrial to rise in that House and oppose this Bill. But he rose to oppose it because, although he was not unwilling to support the principle of the right to work he was not going to pass a Bill to give the right to work when he did not think the Bill would ever give it at all. The hon. Member who had just sat down had said that they did not want negative criticism, and he agreed, but neither did they want Bills that might do so much mischief as to set back the whole march of progress, and he thought this Bill might have that effect. It was the mover of the Bill, he thought, who spoke about the convenient faith of dealing with this question by indirect methods, but he believed there were methods that would have a far greater effect than some of those proposed. He voted in favour of an Amendment to the Address dealing with unemployment, and he did that because he was very much dissatisfied with the speech made by the President of the Local Government Board, as to the means that were being taken by the Government to deal with that question. He believed personally that the way to deal with the question was by root and branch reform of our land system. He sat for a division where almost all his constituents were either miners or steel-workers, and he did not see what he was going to take to them out of this Bill, but he did see what he might take to them if they could only induce the Party opposite to show the same enthusiasm upon questions of land reform as they showed upon measures such as this, which were merely palliatives. Land reform would benefit far more classes than the miners, but he would take that point at any rate. The constituency of East Denbighshire was covered with mines almost from end to end. One speaker had said that they were all agreed that the miners got far too little of the share of the wealth that they produced. Well, there was only one way to give them more share of that wealth, and in that way to give them less unemployment, and that was really to increase the operations of mining in this country and to bring mining land into use that was at present kept out of use. In East Denbighshire they had a number of miners who wanted jobs, and they had too few jobs. The result was low wages and nothing to fall back on in time of unemployment. But if, on the other hand, they were to rate and tax the land in that county division upon its real market value, and not allow people to keep valuable mining land and only pay what was practically its agricultural value, the result would be that instead of having a number of men wanting too few jobs, they would have more jobs than men, and then they would be coming somewhere near solving the question of the lowness of wages. They would always have low wages as long as they had land monopoly, and he wished they could get the same enthusiasm for dealing with that question as they got in dealing with palliatives. It had been suggested that modern industry required a surplusage of labour, and the unemployed, therefore, must be always with us. He did not accept such counsels of despair. It was quite obvious that as long as there was a surplusage of labour, there would always be low wages, except so far as it was possible to get high wages by combination. But if land was put to proper use one would be absolutely certain to get more mills opened and more works going on, and wages would then rise. Let them take the case of the joiners and carpenters. How could they get the building trade to give employment to joiners and carpenters by keeping land out of the market near their great towns? Suppose they imposed a tax on land values, the result would be that if they brought land near the towns into building use they would give work to the men engaged in the building trades, and to the joiners and carpenters as well. He personally thought that instead of advancing the question of unemployment, a Bill like this might simply have the effect of sending people to sleep about these great reforms. He thought the first thing was to get at the essentials, and the essentials were the root and basic facts upon which this industrial depression rested. Let them take the case of Huddersfield the other day, where a man wanted to double the extent of his mill, but in applying to the landowner he was asked for the neighbouring land exactly double the price of the land upon which his mill stood. He found he could not pay it, because if he built his mill he would also be rated enormously on it, and finally he had to give up the idea. What was the result? The men who would have been employed in building the mill got no employment, the men who would have quarried the stone or brought it to Huddersfield got no employment, and the men who were to work in the mill got no employment. He asked them to remember that the millowner and his men had made the land valuable, not the landlord. He wanted to ask the Government to show some seriousness in dealing with the question of land reform, and why he voted in favour of the Amendment to the Address was that he did not think they were showing real seriousness on that subject. They could take no real steps towards dealing with unemployment until the English Valuation Bill was brought forward, and they could base certain land proposals upon it. The present was the Government's third session, and they were still waiting for that Bill. That gave him a reason for voting against the Government as regarded the measures they were taking, but it gave him no reason for voting in favour of the Bill now before the House, which would do no good whatsoever. He did not think the miners and the steel-workers in his constituency would thank them for the Bill at all. He did not think many of them had considered its provisions, though he was sure that they all in theory expected him to support it, but he would not do so, because he thought it was a bad Bill, and that they had got to begin at the other end. By beginning at the wrong end they would simply retard the whole course of labour. It did not terrify him at all that this might be a Socialist measure, because there were any amount of Socialist measures in which he believed and any amount in which he did not believe. But would this Bill do what its supporters claimed for it? He did not think so. If it was shown that the Government were not prepared to deal with the real root evils, and if it was shown after the Royal Commission reported that there was nothing substantial in their report, then as a counsel of despair he might vote for a Bill like this, but until it had been shown that this Parliament could not deal with the real root evils of the question, he declined to vote for a Bill which he thought would simply allay the public conscience and take attention away from the real issues which lay at the root of our industrial system. For those reasons he intended to vote in favour of the Amendment, and against the Bill.

MR. GRAYSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Colne Valley) said that Members on his side of the House were usually accused by Members on the other side of wanting the moon or of being ultra-idealistic, and asking for too much at once, or of refusing to perform ordinary social amenities until they had got the ideal they were striving for. He must commend the hon. Member who had just sat down for his wonderful patience and hope, if he expected that the Liberal Government were going to tackle in any very serious manner the great land question, the question of land monopoly. His friends were complained of because they had shown no enthusiasm on the question of land monopoly, but they had a right also to complain that those who were complaining of them on that account had not shown any enthusiasm on the other equally important question of bringing within the area of national control all the great industrial undertakings that would likewise tend to solve this problem of unemployment. They had heard a lot that day from the other side about sympathy for the poor people who were unemployed, and they had been told repeatedly that they on that side had no monopoly of sympathy for the unemployed; did they not also feel sorry for these poor outcasts, show their distended hearts, and say: "We are sorry for them, but we have to sit down in blank despair and evolve specious arguments for doing nothing"? They on that side of the House had been told that they had to describe what kind of work they were going to give to the unemployed; were they going to place the carpenter on the hill-tops of Wales and ask him to rub the earth with a spade? Might he ask what they did with the unemployed mechanic now, what kind of occupation he was allowed to drift to? The Member for Birkenhead had said they could not put a carpenter with his skilled muscles to planting trees or to digging earth. Why, he had seen carpenters, joiners, engineers, and every kind of mechanic, not only standing in the dock stands of Liverpool and Birkenhead waiting to be taken on as dock labourers, but between sandwich-boards, walking down the public streets, because they had to do it rather than face starvation. It did not devolve upon him and his friends to tell the Government what should be the work; it was not their duty as an Opposition Party to suggest to the Government how to solve these things. The very holding of their position as a Government—[MINISTERIAL interruptions.] He noticed consternation when the responsibilities of the Government were pointed out to them. When they accepted office they accepted responsibility for every social problem, and he confronted them with this problem of unemployment. He had noticed an irresistible tendency on the part of hon. Members opposite to show a distaste for the hateful realism of this question of unemployment. Why impair the beautiful picture that hon. Members had built up for themselves? Why upset their castle of illusions that allowed them to go through life without bothering about these questions? Why bring into the purview of the House of Commons the haggard sight of the working man whom they were meeting every day? Not many yards from the House, hon. Members were confronted every night with a problem that made them feel ashamed not only of having to be jointly responsible for a state of mismanagement such as that, but of the professed Christianity of their nation. He and his friends felt that this problem of unemployment had to be solved, and that if the present Government could find no way of solving it they were giving them the strongest possible argument to use in the country to bring about their speedy superannuation. They heard the other day that there was no great demand for another measure on this question. The hon. Member for Burnley had complained that he (Mr. Grayson) went down to his constituency and made a speech, the philosophy of which tended to destroy thrift and encourage drunkenness. Why did he go down to the hon. Member's constituency? It was a record meeting in that constituency. There were two theatres packed with eager people, and there were 2,000 people turned away. Why? It was because they were discussing the unemployed question. Was there not a demand in the country when one found men tramping from the provincial towns to London in their rags and tatters, suffering hunger and bearing public opprobrium, in order to lay their cause before the President of the Local Government Board? In that constituency, when he was dealing with the argument that the poor were unemployed because they were thriftless, and because they drank, he tried to compare the income of the average working man when working with the amount of money that he, as a Socialist claimed, was taken out of the total product of his labour in order to glut the maw of those who contributed no part to the production of commodities. He tried to estimate what the drink bill of this country was, and how the drink bill was divided between those who drank rich wines and those who drank cheap adulterated beer that made them drunk in half an hour, in proportion to the five hours he had seen it take others drinking expensive wines. It had been his privilege as a journalist to sit in the lowest kind of tavern watching the workers there, and to watch the other people also. He had seen poor debilitated workers coming in sober after a day's arduous labour, and one pint of beer had disturbed their equilibrium. The question of drunkenness was not one of comparative thrift or thriftlessness. They were preparing the organisations of their workers to be played upon by the filth and adulteration that they were tolerating under this *regime*. It had been said that there would be no one cure for the problem of unemployment, and he had the utmost pleasure in giving his full assent to that proposition. He did not believe that this Bill would solve the problem of unemployment. It had been said before from that side of the House that the problem of unemployment was absolutely coincidental with the whole problem of competitive industry. One hon. Member had denied that they needed a surplusage of unemployed labour in order to carry on the industry of the country. Let them imagine then a state of society in which every man willing to work had work to do. Let them imagine that every employer was looking for workmen, instead of hordes of workmen looking for employers. What would be the situation? If the workers were organised in strong trade unions—and that was an increasing tendency—they would demand in return for their labour what they conceived to be the product of their labour. It was unthinkable that they should have a permanence of competitive industry and yet have all the available unemployed employed. They heard of men becoming unemployable—they had heard it from strange lips that day—and that there were loungers and pot-house louts who would use this measure as a means of sponging on the community and refusing ordinary work. They were told that these people who were morally unfit were the despair of those who would solve the problem. He had seen them being manufactured into unemployable men before his eyes, and hon. Members could see it any day if they would open their eyes on an ordinary conventional tragedy in the working part of any town. He had watched a man returning every Friday night, with his wages in his pocket, to a little slum hovel, with his wife with her apron loaded with provisions for the week. The children had been comparatively happy in their rags, and everything had been barely comfortable—an average type of working class prosperity. He had looked at him sometimes and felt that even he had got his minimum of comfort out of the life he led. But some morning the word went round that Mr. So-and-so had stopped. They could hardly realise the tragedy that charged those words. He had watched gradually all the disposable articles of furniture going to the pawnshop and to the broker; he had seen those children gradually growing more and more ragged, and the woman more and more haggard, until the thing had ended in a loathsome tragedy, when the wife had finished in the infirmary and the man gone on tramp. Should they hear more jeers and more gibes now about a man who had started out in life full of hope and strength and robustness, saying, "Only give me work that I may earn a living, even a living prescribed for me by a stereotyped system in which I have had no chance of formulating my desires?" Men in work dreaded being out of work, and he was glad to hear one hon. Member say that when he first came to London he dreaded unemployment. A man who got out of work at first thought he would die in a week, and did not know how he would manage to get along, but he got through a fortnight, and then in three more weeks he was still living, with this daily process of deterioration going on. Shop door after shop door had given him the unsentimental face of the foreman saying, "There is nothing to do." He had been seized with the sense of hopelessness, and should they have moralists declaiming against him when, with his wife to think of, instead of facing that last horrible starvation, he turned round and committed ravages upon society in defence of his individuality? No. This problem was a problem, he admitted, that was not going to have one or ten solutions. The land question mentioned by the hon. Member who had just sat down was a great part of it. The Bill they were considering that day, which caused so much dissatisfaction amongst those from whom one would have expected help, proposed to give a man the right to say to his local authority: "I want work; my muscles are ready for work, my physique is yearning for work; give me work, and I will do the work." It did not matter what kind of work it was. Hon. Members opposite said: "Because you are a watchmaker and your fingers are delicate, we have no work for you to do; we could give you a job at digging, but you had better go on without food a little longer, because digging would spoil your fingers." They were not concerned with a problem of maintaining specific art in a man's fingers; they were concerned with a problem of life and death, of dignity or pauperisation, and he suggested that the present Government was failing in its duty in not dealing in a very serious manner with this problem. There was a feeling throughout the country—and he felt entitled to say it; he had heard the kind of remarks going on in working class constituencies—that the House of Commons could not find the time to deal with the serious, throbbing questions that lay at the door of the working men. Hon. Members opposite must either tell them something they were going to do or else feel sorry for their past ridicule when other Governments had tried to do something. He took part in a demonstration once to secure a Bill similar to but weaker than the one under discussion. He was in a crowded market street where the police came in with their batons and beat down those poor, hungry, debilitated, ragged men. It was in Manchester. It was not because they had injured private property, not because they had broken a window, not because they had committed a crime, but because they stood still in the middle of the street and stopped the wheels of commerce for a moment. The result of that was that in the House of Commons there was a hasty conference of the then Conservative Government, and they managed to get an Unemployed Bill through. Hon. Members opposite had never had a more hilarious time in their lives than then, because there was humour and fun for weeks and weeks, and they flooded the country with ridicule and scorn of that Bill. Hon. Members opposite made speeches night after night and said: "Look at that legislation. It is not legislation, it is a spectre." The President of the Board of Trade said, "Call this a measure. It is a motor car without petrol." This was the third session of the present Parliament and the motor car was still without petrol. When was the petrol coming to supply the motor car? When was the occasion coming when they would deal with this pressing problem? He did not believe that the House would be too generous in its allocation of time to this subject if it devoted a few weeks to its consideration and nothing else. It was not an academic question; it was one which affected the lives of the whole of the people; it was a question which would give dignity and new hope to the life of every workman. It was a question not only for those who were out of work but for those who were in work as well. While the hammers were going inside, while the workers were slaving, there came others knocking at the doors, saying "May we come in?" The unemployed man felt that he could live on a less wage than the trade union rate, and it was not his duty to stand up for an abstract principle if he wanted bread. Therefore he looked on this question as a Socialist without any hope of a solution from the Government. This was practically an opportunist Government, giving a little here and a little there. But if the Bill passed they would still be confronted with the organic social problem of the unemployed. If the Bill passed, in the present chaotic disorganisation of their system of industry, they would stlil have unemployment going on. The hon. Member for Preston had said that they could not pay two men's wages out of one sovereign. Why two men's wages out of one sovereign? The hon. Member had said that they must increase the total wealth product of the country before they could employ any more people. Had it ever struck hon. Members that it was not so much a problem of production as of distribution—of giving enough to those who produced and not so much to those who were only speculators? In the last fifty years wealth had increased by miraculous leaps and bounds, and while it was endeavoured to be shown that the increased wealth of the country was due to free trade, yet this problem remained grimly ever present through all our prosperity. It was not that they could not find work for every one; it was that they were trying an impossible task; they were trying to lift themselves up by their boot laces; they were trying to solve the unemployed problem while leaving vested interests alone; they were trying to find work for workers without interfering with the interests of those who had rents and possession of wealth. It would never be done, and he did not hope that this House would do it as at present composed. It would only be done when the means of production, distribution, and exchange, without access to which they could not live, were in the hands of the people and not in the hands of a small clique. It might sound like a dream from afar, but if the Government persisted in their present method of flouting serious social problems, if they continued their dispiriting criticism of serious measures, which might have faults but which contained vital principles, then Socialism would not be so much a dream as it seemed at the present moment, and the ineptitude and futility of the present Govermnent would be realised. The Government had an opportunity which had been afforded to few Governments of fulfilling the pledges which it had given to the people — the opportunity of wiping from the page of promises the things which had occupied their election programme for so long, and of dealing with the social question. In his election address he had put in black type, and with special emphasis, two or three special questions, and the biggest by far was that of the unemployed. It was not a small matter. When he went up and down the country people came and asked him how they were getting on with the unemployed problem. He replied, "Come and see." If they came to see, they would be struck by the futility of the methods now being adopted by the Government. Workers had a destiny beyond mere drudgery. Workers had a right to some part of the gorgeous banquet of intellectual and artistic life now held to be the monopoly of a class. The workers would realise that destiny, and they were standing there that day to defend it. He believed that it was within the power of the Government to get back some of their prestige if only they would deal seriously with the unemployed problem. He did not know what would be the fate of the Bill that day. If it were refused, if the Government voted against it, if the majority were against it, then it would give them more texts for public lectures. It would provide them with more illustrations to point out to the people the true extent of the seriousness and earnestness with which the present Government fulfilled its task.

Were they to sit down with the ordinary assurance of the right hon. Gentleman that they could find no solution for this question? If they could find no solution, then, for the sake of their dignity and manhood they should resign and let others try. But they needed money. [Laughter.] He was glad to contribute to the "gaiety of nations." His observation caused hilarity. Why? Obviously this social problem had its financial aspect, and why should that cause hilarity? Whenever it was sought to get money one beautiful area was always left safe and untouched. They believed that the money should come from the bursting bags of unearned increment that the Government were too timid to tackle; they believed that the money should come from that increment which was due to the industry of the people. Let him appeal to hon. Members opposite to consider that this was not a matter of obeying the party whip, but one which lay between them and their constituents, and let them seriously ask themselves what the majority of their constituents would say. If they would do that they would realise that this was not an ordinary question, but an extraordinary question preceding a revolution. If they read the history of France, if they read the history of even their own country, they would realise that even the stolid, slow, and thickheaded British workman would arise out of his slumber, and, though he had not the volatile spirit of the Latin, yet there was something very dogged, often something very ruthless about him when he did wake and rubbed his eyes, and asked the Government what they had done with his destiny. This was a question which ought to be dealt with by serious men in a serious, and not in a frivolous, manner. If it were dealt with by serious men in a serious manner it would not be the problem of Utopia or the millennium, but it would be the first task of the Government—the task of clearing from their programme this longed-for measure, and placing it on the Statute-book of the country.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): Since the celebrated year of 1834 when the Poor Law Reports were made, and the legislation resulting therefrom was passed, there have been few subjects, if any, that have evoked more interest and induced more sympathy than the subject matter embedded but not embodied, in this Bill; and for that interest, pity, and sympathy the reason is obvious to every man in this House, whether he be a Socialist or a Tory, a Liberal or a Radical. The workless workman is an object of pity, while the casual worker is a profoundly pathetic figure of sympathetic interest, and we all of us in this Parliament, whatever our views, have done what reasonably could be expected of us, not only in the last two years, but in the last twenty or twenty-five years, to mitigate his suffering and to decasualise his labour; and, generally speaking, to give him, both in house and home, factory and workshop, a more tolerable condition in society than he had thirty or forty years ago. The last speaker has suggested that nothing has been done by the present Government, nothing serious attempted, in regard to this throbbing question. My answer to that is that there is not a platform where landlords most do congregate, there is not a chamber of commerce, there is not a stock exchange, where, instead of saying that of the Government, they do not speak of us as threatening every monopoly, trying to make access to the land possible, and committing the mistake of exalting fustian and corduroy above the frock coat and top hat. Hon. Members with sympathetic aims but fantastic ideals and irrelevant generalisations, accuse us who sit on these benches of lack of sympathy or indisposition to seek real practical remedies for the evil of unemployment. But all that is beside the point, and to accuse the House of Commons of a want of sympathy on this subject is unjust. Hon. Members have done me the honour to-day of not saying an unkind word about my administration of the Act of 1905. It cannot be said. Those who know me are aware that every hour and day that I could get I have devoted to this problem. In a way, I have been the Derby dog running down the Parliamentary course, hon. Members throwing sticks and stones at me all the time. I believe that on one occasion I turned round with the intention of neither barking nor biting; and then complaint was made about my tone. Just fancy Revolutionists talking about tone! We want to ameliorate the sufferings which the hon. Member has described, and we want to bring in, not the one form of relief indicated by this Bill, but many forms of relief. Slowly but surely we are getting to closer grips with this problem, and its consideration is not at all obstructed by want of money in this country. On the contrary, there is no country in the world—mainly because we are a free people and therefore a generous people—where money is so readily forthcoming. We may be mistaken in our charity and generosity, still there is no country in the world where so much money is diverted to the relief of the poor, the impotent, the aged and sick, the halt, the maimed and the blind as in this country. There is no country in which so many noble men and generous women give so much time to the consideration of the lot of those who are less comfortably off than themselves. There is no country whose institutions, whether in the shape of the much-abused workhouse, the infirmary, the almshouse, or that vast fabric of institutions which the trade unions and the friendly societies have built up, and which would not last two years if this Bill were passed——

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): Humbug.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: The hon. Member who made that observation is represented by a town council which, by forty-four votes to twenty-five, shares the view I have expressed.

MR. JOWETT: We will change it.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: And I prefer the town council of Bradford on a sane practical question to the hon. Member's extreme Socialistic views.

MR. JOWETT: We will alter it.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: When it is, I shall probably adapt myself to the altered circumstances. Now, where is there a House of Commons or a Parliament in which this question would have been discussed as it has been discussed here during the last two years? I know of none where the attention would have been given which the House of Commons has bestowed on the unemployment difficulty. And what is the reason for it? In the last ten years this problem has greatly changed. We have drifted from cash charity for the destitute and impotent to schemes of relief work, and the removal of that temptation to pauperism to which unemployment so frequently leads. That has already manifested itself in many ways. Social activities in our great cities have helped towards this change. There are many agencies, personal, educational, social, religious, and philanthropic which have for their object the prevention of a man from sinking into a pauperised condition. No one single remedy is sufficient for this. A few in combination have helped, and are helping; others are in process of experiment, and some suggested by hon. Members opposite are on their trial, and hardly any of the experiments similar to those that would be carried out by this Bill will be found, in my judgment, to have warranted the faith in them, the money spent on them, and the time wasted on them when the facts are revealed and the results displayed. All these activities of the last ten years resulted in the Act of my right hon. friend the Member for South Dublin. He said that the time had gone by when charity, pauperism, and the relief of the destitute were enough, and we ought to go beyond it. He brought in a Bill in 1905 the object of which was to organise and reduce to something like order the costly, chaotic, and ever misguided attempts to deal with this matter by indiscriminate charity, and that attempt took the form of the Act of 1905. That Act was passed in a hurry. Do not let us commit the folly to-day of passing a worse Act in a greater hurry, because if we do we shall be confronted next year with not only the partial failure—in some cases complete—of the present Act, but we shall be confronted with greater failures than we now see. We found immediately we came into office that the motor car had no petrol. The hon. Member for Colne Valley said that it lacks petrol now. That is not true. The motor-car was started along the road, and a rocky road it is. But engaged, as I am, in the Sisyphian task of rolling the right stone up the wrong hill, difficult as that is, it is easy compared with the task of Tantalus which the hon. Member for Colne Valley wishes the House of Commons to enter on. We found the motor car without petrol. We supplied the petrol, and supplied so much in the first year that, notwithstanding my promptitude in receiving applications and my willingness to go in advance of the local distress committees, I was in the difficult and unsatisfactory position of having to put back into the Treasury money that I asked the distress committees, if they had the opportunity, to expend? The whole subject of distress arising from unemployment was remitted to a Royal Commission specially created to consider this subject. That investigation is nearly complete. Supposing the Government were to be foolish enough to adopt this Bill and send it to an ordinary Committee, which it could not do, or to a special Committee that would have to take some form of evidence, that Committee could not report, however good our intentions were, as soon as the Royal Commission on the Poor Law will be able to report, with its recommendations for consideration and probable action. Then why should we be denied the benefit of the advice, the investigation, the evidence, the wise counsel and recommendations of the Royal Commission, which has upon it two Socialists and a Labour man, which has every phase of economic, social, and political thought represented upon it, and which is preparing its report pending the time that we are administering the present Act in a kindly, generous, and practical way, and at the same time supplying the distress committees with money with which to carry on the Act during the time that the Commission is considering its report. May I ask hon. Members below the Gangway to remember what kind of works it is they would want to be set up if this Bill were passed. They would be works precisely similar to those that I am now administering, and to which I am banker, clerk of works, and foreman. What kind of works are these? I will give one or two. I will take Hollesley Bay, which is an exact replica of the type of work which would be set up by this Bill. That estate, where, on an average, 250 men are employed every day, has cost the Central Unemployed Body in less than three years a gross sum of £100,000. Before the estate became a public relief works, a steward with eighteen farm hands was able to make a small profit or a small loss every year. Since it became a State relief work, with 250 men engaged on it, it has had a net loss of £21,000 a year.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): It is not true.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: But this Bill asks me, and would place upon me, the responsibility of dotting down in every county and district in England relief works of that particular kind. I hope the hon. Member for Woolwich will give his attention to this.

MR. CROOKS: I am listening, but it is not true. I repeat, even if I am suspended, that it is not true.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: That is a type of interruption that I had best ignore. What else is happening at Hollesley Bay, and what will happen under this Bill? The labour and the work of these men is brought into competition with the local market gardeners and farmers, and when I go down to Hollesley Bay I am confronted with small deputations of professional decent agricultural labourers and servants of market gardeners, complaining of the fact that our attempt, well-intentioned, charitably-inclined, and fed with State money, on behalf of the unemployed, is dispossessing the decent agricultural labourer. I go from Hollesley Bay to another type of colony. I take South Ockenden, which has cost, up to this moment, £22,000 for purchase, maintenance, buildings, and so forth, and it has an average daily attendance of seventy men. What are the facts, and I put them as charitably as one can. Seven hundred and ninety men have passed through that colony at a cost per week per man of anything between 30s. and 32s., including the allowance to the family, and in the whole time that that colony has been in operation—and no one will but admit that I have given it the most generous and the most fatherly assistance—out of the 790 which have gone through that colony, its object being to train men for the land to take them back to the land, there is not a recorded instance of the men going back to agricultural work.

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.): Surely that is not the sole object of the colony. You are converting it into a rural workhouse.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: How can the hon. Member say we are converting that place into a country workhouse, when the average cost per man per week is just double the rate of wages paid to the agricultural labourer in the district? I come to my third illustration. I will take the rural workhouse called Laindon. Laindon has cost to this moment in round figures for cost and maintenance £20,000; and it extends to 100 acres and has an average of 140 men engaged upon it Laindon is a type of the thing we should come to if we had penal colonies. I went there and saw an old agricultural labourer, between sixty and sixty-five years old, digging in a field within 200 yards of it, getting 15s. or 16s. a week. I said to him, "How long does it take you to dig an acre of land?" He said "It takes me a fortnight to dig an acre of that land." I went across the rail and found on the public works sixty-seven able-bodied men under conditions approximating to a penal colony similar to those under right-to-work conditions, taking ten days to dig an acre and a half.

MR. CROOKS: The right hon. Gentleman will forgive me I know, and the House too, but I say that this was an able-bodied workhouse and not a test for unemployed. They were put there under the Local Government Board's orders to do such work as they might be found fit to do. They were sent there like all able-bodied men in workhouses to kill time and not to do work.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: If the hon. Member will look at his Bill he will find that Laindon obviously approximates to that, and is a replica of the penal form of labour colony. If you look at Clause 7, subsection 3, you will see that my facts rightly applied to Hollesley Bay, to Ockenden, and to Laindon, can similarly be applied to experiments like Hadleigh, Murieston, and Starnthwaite, and there is not a single type of relief work suggested in this Bill, there is not a penal labour colony that is indicated in Clause 7, subsection 3, in which this will not be the case. It will be said that this Bill, which seeks to multiply these places, is extremely popular with those who know most about it. Let us examine the support at the back of this Bill. I am peculiarly and properly situated to know the views of Boards of guardians and of local authorities. A resolution of the Tottenham Urban District Council was apparently sent to all the local authorities in the country that were likely to take any part in support of the Bill, or to express views about it, but the result of this effort was that we have only received at the Local Government Board resolutions in support of the Bill from three town councils out of 322; from sixteen urban district councils out of 818; from four rural district councils out of 671; and from one board of guardians out of 657. And what is more, the hon. Member for Leicester speaks with an authority which is not equal to his assertion. The Leicester Town Council has voted against the Bill by twenty-four to nine.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Why?

*MR. JOHN BURNS: Because they do not believe in it.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: No; because it did not supply enough national funds to enable them to spend money at Leicester.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: If that is so, it was the worst reason they could possibly urge. The Board of Guardians were against it by twenty-one to fifteen, and the Central Poor Law Conference was practically unanimous against it. So far as I can gather, with the exception of a few small bodies, well-drilled and finely disciplined, but sometimes over-persuaded, there is practically no public support of what was known as the Right-to-Work Bill. To come to the trade unions. I have two circulars, and I find that the Trade Union Congress with that practical sagacity which distinguishes that body—I am an ex-member of it, and it is because I know it so well that I am going to quote its opinion——

MR. CURRAN: It has got along without you.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: I once purified that great body, and "Pride's Purge" may have to be applied again. The Trade

Union view is expressed in its last circular. It says—

> "Two things, therefore, seem to be necessary:—
>
> 1. To use all our endeavours to prevent a decrease in the demand for labour, and,
>
> 2. To meet any decrease which may occur by decreasing the working hours per day or per week, instead of, as at present, decreasing the number of workers employed.
>
> We therefore recommend:—
>
> 1. To minimise fluctuations:—
>
> That trade unions be urged to abolish overtime, and that where this is not wholly possible, it be restricted to the narrowest limits, and that when worked, it be penalised to the fullest extent.
>
> 2. To keep the whole body of workers in employment:—
>
> That the present practice of discharging workmen in times of depression be discontinued, and the short time system adopted so that a shortage of employment might be met collectively by all working shorter hours.
>
> 3. To ensure the practical application of the above suggestions:—
>
> That the Joint Board seek the sanction of the three national labour organisations to circularise all trade unions urging them to place these proposals before their members so that uniform action towards their adoption may be taken throughout the whole country."

It is signed by Mr. Steadman, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Mitchell, and the only reference there is to this Unemployed Bill is in a little paragraph on the top of page 2 which says—

> "We suggest this evil should be met by endeavouring to secure the maximum number of workmen to perform such work as may be required, and, where the volume of work can be increased to advantage, to foster such increase with a view to employing any surplus labour which may exist. The second of these proposals, we suggest, can best be secured by the Unemployed Workmen's Act about to be introduced by the Labour Members."

But the circular says nothing about the "right-to-work," or the very very difficult or impossible conditions embodied in this Bill that we now have under consideration. The hon. Member for Leicester, who has been a member of the Central Unemployed Body ought to know that all the distress committees throughout the country, including the Central Unemployed Body, are agreed that relief works, whether carried out by philanthropic efforts or by public authorities, do the workmen more harm than good, and perpetuate and stereotype in industrial society the very chaos they are supposed to remove, and yet the hon. Member for Leicester, who nods assent to that view, is asking the House to adopt a right to work Bill that will give employment to every unemployed man and woman according to their capacity at the standard rate of wages—which means the trade union rate of wages. The hon. Member cannot deny that.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: There is no provision for that.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: Suppose I employed any of those out of work carpenters or other skilled workmen and reduce their pay from 10½d. to 7½d. or 6d. per hour, would hon. Members below the Gangway opposite not heckle me? This Bill demands the compulsory right to work. Under this Bill every local authority is to be compelled to employ every unemployed man and woman according to their capacity at trade union or standard rates of wages, and, in the event of its being unable to provide such work, there is to be maintenance. What is to be this maintenance in the absence of work? Is it to cost 24s. per week as at the Laindon rural workhouse, or 30s. as at Hollesley Bay and South Ockendon? We all know, as practical men, that if once we concede the principle of this Bill we shall have the lanes of our country districts black with men, no longer content to receive 15s. or 18s. a week, coming into our towns and cities where the minimum rate will be 28s. or 30s.; and thus we shall reach this condition of things, that the last lot of the poor in our cities will be infinitely worse than the first. I will give the House a practical illustration. What will become of the riverside labourers and the casual dock labourers if this right to work Bill is passed? Their ranks will be increased by the alluring temptation that this Bill will hold out, not only to men who are unemployed, but also to men who are in work in country districts at lower than the guaranteed standard rates in the towns under this Bill. In connection with the existing relief works there are cases in which men have left their ordinary work, where they have to give full measure, and sometimes overflowing measure, to engage in country relief works which can never be properly organised or profitably carried on under a Bill such as this. What effect will the Bill have on the unemployed of all trades? What class of work are they going to do? They cannot work at their own trade, because it does not afford employment. In a penal colony there is market gardening, which is three times more unprofitable than free competitive work. The only trade that offers employment under this Bill is the building trade. That is the trade which is always most fluctuating and has always the largest number of men out of work. It is the building trade that will have to absorb the residuum of the unemployed of every other trade, and the result will be that the standard of efficiency of the men will be reduced and the trade will be damaged in every respect by the building trade being made more casual than it is. What are we to do with the women? What are we going to do with unemployed women?

AN HON. MEMBER: Make them suffragettes.

*MR. JOHN BURNS: I believe there is not much need for schemes of relief work for unemployed women when there is such a demand in domestic service. Let hon. Members look at the advertisement columns of any London daily paper. Take, for example, the *Daily Telegraph*. I tested the matter the other day. I was asked to provide relief works for women, and I said, "Yes, I will give them three or four years generous treatment as an experiment." I wrote to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* and asked him to state how many women were advertised for in his paper in any one week. The reply was that for that week there had been advertised in the *Daily Telegraph* vacancies for 1,000 unemployed women of different classes and descriptions at the same time I was being criticised for not supporting more liberally a scheme for a few dozen of women. However the experiment is going on, and my experience is that £1,514 has been paid for clothes made by women employed at these relief works, which could be got, better in cut and style, and probably in quality, for £994. Moreover, in the reports from East-end board of guardians it is pointed out that this work displaces professional women who have been hitherto doing it. There are 100,000 navvies in this country. In my judgment these men are probably the best unit in our industrial army. What we owe to the navvy has never been recognised. I am trying to recognise it by improving his housing on public works wherever he is employed. There are also 30,000 Irish labourers, equally good human material, who come over to this country to work. If the right to work is recognised and every navvy has the right to claim work or maintenance, then men will not take the trouble to walk from job to job, from railway to waterworks; they will not cross the channel to do laborious work for three or four months in the year. They will remain in their own parishes, and when they are out of work they will go to the town hall and register their names. They will consider that they have done their duty in looking for work when they have registered themselves at the labour bureau, especially when maintenance rewards their indisposition to look for work. That kind of thing ought not to be encouraged. The hon. Member for South St. Pancras has suggested that Clause 3 should be postponed, but the hon. Member for Liecester, who in this matter is acting in the capacity of Warwick the Kingmaker, has declared that Clause 3 is the kernel of the Bill, and that it cannot be postponed. It is because Clause 3 cannot be accepted, because the Bill cannot be amended, because we cannot make a good overcoat out of a bad pair of trousers, that I ask the House to reject this measure. If the House does not reject it hon. Members will encourage every workman to be indifferent to the claims of his trade union and to the claims of collective providence in other ways. Our workmen have the highest wages, the shortest hours, and, on the whole, the best housing in the world, with the exception of New Zealand, mainly because they have been taught that while prosecuting their own social aims and political ideals they have a right to hold on to the practical remedies for improving their lot, which this Bill would undermine and ultimately overthrow. The Government consider that this Bill is unworkable, that it is a delusion and a snare, and we intend to vote against it. We intend to vote for the Amendment, which, in the light of experience, we heartily commend to the House.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I apologise to the House for intervening in this debate; I should not have done so but for the allusions which have been made to the Act of 1905. It is almost unnecessary for me to point out that the fate of this Bill has been decided by the speech of the hon. Member for Burnley, who moved the Amendment, and by the speech of the President of the Local Government Board. The right hon. Gentleman has addressed himself to the Bill itself, which has not been the case in regard to the majority of the speeches we have heard in its support. During the five years I had the honour of being President of the Local Government Board it was my lot to listen to many debates upon this subject of unemployment in the House, and I have read a great deal about it outside the House. On most of those occasions I confess that after the debates I have gone away feeling that there has been very little learned or done of a practical kind, but never before have I entertained the feeling so profoundly as I do to-day as the result of the debate upon the Second Reading of this Bill. The hon. Member for Leicester, in his able speech, sought to justify his contention that the Bill found its origin in the Act of 1905. If that is the use which is to be made of honest efforts on the part of men who do not hold Socialist views and who are utterly opposed to them because they believe they are destructive of society and the best interests of this country—if that is the use which is to be made of our endeavours to do something towards the solution of a question as to the gravity of which we are all agreed, then I venture to say that not only will this discussion have offered no practical solution of the question, but it will have set back the whole of this movement for many a day. Remember what the effect is of the attitude taken up by the hon. Member for Leicester. The hon. Member thought it right to express some moderate approval of the Act of 1905—an approval which I realise arose not so much from the merits of the measure as from the possibility it offered to him and his friends to turn it to useful account for themselves. Having expressed some rather tepid praise of that measure on one or two occasions, he says that it is the real origin of the Socialist movement in this direction, and he actually gave to me, as the member of the Government responsible for that Act, the credit for this great movement which is now advancing, and which its supporters think is going to sweep the country. I wonder whether the hon. Member for Leicester ever gave me that credit when addressing Socialist meetings in the country. I wonder whether, when he is making speeches at Socialist meetings and holding up to contempt and ridicule all other Parties indiscriminately—and I am bound to say that they distribute their favours in that respect equally—I wonder whether he has ever said that in reality Socialism is not due to him and his friends, but that the real author of this great movement is to be found on the Opposition Front Bench. I doubt whether he has ever made that statement out of this House, and I question, if he did make it, whether, he would find anybody in the audience who would believe it. This is only the personal side of the question. Is it likely that in dealing with a problem so complicated and difficult as this, anybody, whether he approaches it as a student, or has had to approach it officially as some of us have had to do, can entertain any feeling except that expressed in all quarters, namely, that it is one of the utmost gravity? It moves men deeply when brought into close contact with it, and any man would be justly proud to apply his brains and labour to it if he could find a solution. In that we are all agreed. In regard to this Bill, how much nearer, I ask the House, are we to a solution of the question? Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway have attacked the President of the Local Government Board because he is, as they allege, unsympathetic regarding the work in which they and their friends are engaged. It is no use attacking ex-Presidents or the present President of the Local Government Board. The duty of those who believe that experiments such as those which have been made can be made permanent works is to show that the allegations which have been made against them are untrue, and that the statements as to the extravagance and bad results from this temporary and artificial employment are incorrect. The hon. Member for Leicester says that the foundation of the measure is to be found in the Act of 1905. I deny that statement absolutely and *in toto.* There is nothing to be found in the Act of 1905 that justifies the claim of the "right to work" principle and that the unemployed should find employment at the hands of the State. What were the conditions which led to the passing of that Act? There was at the time, as I hope there will not be for many a day again, great stress in the labour market, demonstrations were being held in the cities, and applications were being made to town councils and boards of guardians for assistance. Boards of guardians were in difficulties, and they came one after another to the Local Government Board for counsel and advice. Town councils were also in difficulties, and because they could not turn a deaf ear to the entreaties which were addressed to them they were finding employment for these men out of the ordinary rates. It was no new thing, only it was done by the town councils in a manner which was neither carefully worked out nor in any way properly arranged. What was the object of the Act of 1905? It was to co-ordinate these authorities and set up a body which would have power to discriminate between the good and the bad and be able to act as a single body. Where was the right to work? That Act expressly provides that the work should be temporary in its character. It imposes upon those employed, a large number of limitations which I have not time to go into now and further than

that, it enacts that no money drawn from the rates should be used in the payment of wages; and to advance the argument that that Act is a justification for the Bill we have here to-day, is to show that the arguments in favour of the measure are few indeed if the promoters have to have to fall back on one so unsound and having so little real existence. Having said so much in regard to my own responsibility, or the responsibility of the Government of which I was a member, I ought to ask the House a question which has been asked by those who are opposed to this Bill and which has not been answered by those who support it. Indeed, the hon. Member for the Colne Valley in his speech cast ridicule on those who asked him how this Bill was going to solve the difficulty. He was asked what was the kind of work you are going to provide, how you are going to provide it, and what would be the practical effect of this Bill if passed into law. The hon. Member for Leicester says you would give what is the real kernel of the measure—you would give to the people of this country the right to work. Each and all out of work can go, with a few limitations, to their local authorities and demand work, and say that they have a right to get it. I put on one side the provision as to maintenance, because I cannot believe that it is seriously proposed by those responsible for it, or that it would in Committee stand the test of examination for a moment. How is that work going to be provided? There must be many Members in this House who have served on boards of guardians, county councils, and borough councils. Has anyone of them answered for himself the question? How are we to find the work we have to find under this Bill if it becomes an Act of Parliament? It has been very well said that the unemployed do not want to be set to the digging of holes and to the filling of them up again. They do not want work which is artificial. Where is it to be found if it is not to be artificial? If it is remunerative work, it would be there now. If it is not remunerative, but of an artificial character, how is the local authority to find it, and what kind of work is it to be? We heard the speech of the hon. Member for the Denbigh Boroughs who is individually in some little difficulty. He told us that it was very difficult for a Member representing an industrial constituency to oppose the Bill, and then he endeavoured to show the House reasons why he was not going to support it, and what it was he was going to support. It was very courageous after the speech of the hon. Member for Burnley to fall back on land reform as the real solution of the unemployed question. I have heard some ridiculous proposals made, but I have never heard one so ridiculous as that land reforms—that is to say, the various measures of land reform which the hon. Gentleman and his friends advocate—are going to settle even in the smallest degree the question of the unemployed. What did the hon. Member for Burnley say on that subject? I listened to the speech of the hon. Member with admiration and I am delighted to find that one who said himself that he had no connection with the land took so practical and sensible a view of this proposed remedy. He says he would sooner be sent to jail than on to the land.

MR. MADDISON: I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman does not wish to misrepresent me. I was dealing with the policy of putting on to the land people who are not acquainted with the land.

MR. WALTER LONG: I did not intend in any way to misrepresent the hon. Gentleman. I was going to say that subsequently he made it perfectly clear that he was himself in favour of drastic land reform, though that in itself was no remedy for the unemployed question. The hon. Member for the Denbigh Boroughs took exactly the opposite view. He said that this Bill is impossible, and that it would bring about no real reform, but that land reform would get the people back to the land. We who have been the target of hon. Gentlemen opposite for so many years are glad to find, at all events, one advocate on their own side of the House who understands and realises that land reform, even if it did bring people back to the land, would not touch the fringe of this question. What is the kind of work which the local authorities are to find? They are to find work which, presumably, is to be paid for out of the rates It is work which is not remunerative, because we may assume that if it was remunerative, it would probably be carried out by private enterprise. You are to add to the burden of the rates the cost of working this Bill. That is the proposition which is seriously made to-day when there is no man who has looked into the question of municipal life, either in town or country, who does not know that the question of the burden of the rates is one of growing importance and of increasing difficulty, and one which Parliament will be bound to face before very long. Yet with the difficulty connected with the education rate, the highways rate, the sanitary rate, and the poor rate, bearing upon you at the present time, and when there is urgent need for some Parliamentary treatment of this question which shall divide the burden as between Imperial and local exchequers, with all these difficulties facing you and which Parliament up to the present has not been able to deal with satisfactorily, hon. Members come forward and with a cynicism which is extraordinary propose a measure which if passed would add enormously to the burden of the rates, and give in return, what? We were told by an hon. Member below the gangway that, it would give a great return, not perhaps in money, but in character and quality, because it would make the people of this country happy and contented. Would it do so? Would it add to the character of the British race? Would it make them self-respecting and contented if they realised throughout the length and breadth of the land, when not by some great passing wave of depression, not through some unexpected difficulty, but in the ordinary everyday course of business, they had suddenly been cast into the slough of despair, they had not to look for work for themselves, but had only to go and register themselves, and say "I need employment, I have to live in this house or in that neighbourhood." Does anybody believe that that would add to the character of the people? If we doubt that, where is the return to come from? A return in money there certainly cannot be. This House has been ready, as the legislation passed in former years shows, when it is in difficulties to throw work on the local authorities. Something new is required and some difficulty is to be met in connection with the administration of local affairs, and this House not knowing how to get over the difficulty passes a Bill which casts the work and the responsibility on the local authorities, and then, when the work is not done quite as well as it ought to be, people are apt to criticise the local authorities. I think that the local authorities are beginning to wake up and to realise that Parliament is not to be allowed to throw this increasing burden upon them without, at all events, defining in some degree the way in which the work is to be carried out. I listened to the figures given by the President of the Local Government Board without any surprise. I gather from him that only one board of guardians out of 670 has expressed approval of this Bill, and that only two or three municipal authorities are in favour of it. That surely speaks for itself. This Bill has not been before them, but it is not a new thing. It has not been suddenly introduced without preparation and advertisement. Its main provisions are perfectly well known to local authorities and to the people generally. It is a most interesting fact that, although it has been before them in its main ideas and principles so long, there is practically no local authority to be found in the country in favour of the Bill.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Only twenty-four out of 2,468.

MR. WALTER LONG: I think we may say that the Bill has practically no support among the local authorities of the country. Are we to throw on the local authorities this burden which they are unwilling to accept, and which they, I am convinced, would say they could not carry out? In this debate nobody has shown how the Bill is to be carried into effect, or what kind of work the local authorities are to introduce. As I have already said, it is unnecessary for us to argue that this Bill would be destructive of all that is best in local character and national life, and to press our views home, because the President of the Local Government Board has destroyed the measure in the speech which he has made, and certainly we shall vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Burnley without any hesitation. I would only once again urge upon those who are really anxious—and I believe that hon. Members belonging to the Socialist Party are as anxious as all other Parties—to find a solution of the question, that they are going a very bad way to secure the end they have in view if they seek to justify measures like this by falling back on the efforts made by others, not having the same direction, but made with the object of lessening the weight of this national burden. On the contrary, you are far more likely to make people hesitate before they attempt a solution of this question, or to deal with some of the minor parts of the problem, and to paralyse the hands of rather than to give renewed strength to those who are engaged in considering and dealing with this question. Whatever may be the result of this measure, I am satisfied that its passing would add to unemployment instead of lessening it, and also lessen the amount of money available for wages in the country. If there were no other argument than that, it alone would justify opposition to this Bill.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has repudiated with not, I think, unnatural warmth the imputation that the germs of this measure are to be found in his own Act of 1905 and that, as I think was rather suggested by my hon. friend the Member for Leicester, henceforth he must be regarded as the step-father of Socialism in this country. I do not think that any of us who have followed, whether as friends or foes, the political career of the right hon. Gentleman for the last twenty years will regard that as a charge which he need take either much trouble or time to confute. But I only rose for the purpose of pointing out before we come to a division, as I hope we shall, first what is, and next what is not, the issue before us. The real issue is whether we are to give a Second Reading to a Bill of which it is admitted by all its promoters, with the exception of my hon. friend who occupied a somewhat difficult position in initiating the debate, and who discharged his duty in an admirable manner, that the gist and essence is to be found in the third clause. The hon. Member for Leicester described it as the kernel. To pass the Bill without that third clause would be to pass a bloodless and boneless absurdity, to set up a machine and at the same time to deprive it of that measure of fuel and motive power which alone could set it to work. The real issue raised is whether the third clause does or does not meet with the approval of the House. What is the clause? Shortly stated, it comes to this, that, as a remedy for the problem of unemployment, you are to give to every man and every woman who registers himself or herself as an unemployed person the right to demand and to impose on the local authority in the district or area in which he or she resides the obligation to provide work, and work, as I read the Bill, at the standard rate of wages, for I am perfectly certain that trade unionists would not submit to work being given on any other condition, or, in default of such work, to maintain him or her and all those dependent on them. That is, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, an entirely novel principle. That is a principle which involves in its application, as the hon. Member for Burnley said, the complete ultimate control by the State of the full machinery of production, and which, in my opinion, for the reasons which have been given by previous speakers, and which I will not repeat, so far from remedying or helping to remedy the problem of unemployment, will vastly aggravate it. That is the issue before the House. But there is another matter which has very naturally and very properly bulked largely in the speeches of hon. Members which is not in issue at all. That is whether we are satisfied with the provisions at present made by the law and the administration of the law for dealing with the problem of unemployment. For my part, I say without any hesitation, and I speak for my colleagues as well as for myself, I am not satisfied. The problem of unemployment is a many-sided one. It is a problem which you cannot solve unless you consider causes as well as remedies unless you are prepared not merely with correctives, but with preventives, and, for my part, I very much deprecate any attempt to solve it except in a comprehensive and thoroughgoing fashion upon an all-round survey of all the conditions of the case. The problem is of the gravest magnitude and the greatest urgency; I do not think that any spectator of our social conditions will deny that. The real gravity of it consists in this—I am not going into controversial matters; I am not going to say whether it exists in a more or less degree in free trade or in protectionist countries or in certain periods of trade development more than in others; the real gravity of it is this—that we have in this country, and in all highly-developed commercial communities in these days, a chronic state of intermittent employment on the one side, with its concomitant of casual labour on the other. That is the real difficulty you are dealing with. It is an economic difficulty in this sense, that it arises from economic causes, and from the want of ease and automatic adaptation in the machinery both of production and distribution. But the fact that it is an economic difficulty does not absolve the State, in my opinion, from taking regard to it, and from seeing whether it cannot, at any rate, facilitate the solution of it. Even the Act of the right hon. Gentleman himself, of which I do not wish to say one word in disparagement, or to draw from it conclusions which he would not admit, is an admission on the part of all parties in the State that in this matter the State must step in—either the central authority, or the local authority, as the case may be—at least to this extent, to co-ordinate and supplement the ineffectual private and communal efforts—[AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: That is our Bill]—which have, hitherto, failed effectually to deal with the problem. I accept that principle, but I am not going to commit myself to a particular application until I am perfectly satisfied that I am not going to do more harm than good. We are expecting, we hope to receive in the course of a very few months, the Report of the Commission which has been sitting for some years. I am sanguine enough to believe that, at any rate, the Report of that Commission will throw a great deal of much-needed light on the darker and more obscure sides of this problem; but, speaking for the Government, I can assure the House that we are giving, and shall continue to give, with such assistance as that Report may supply, the most careful and earnest consideration during the autumn and winter to the best way of dealing with the matter, whilst I do not pledge myself—it would be dishonest to do so, not having in my mind anything like what I could regard as a complete and adequate solution—to introduce specific legislation. Certainly we shall not fail in the most earnest, strenuous, and resolute desire to bring before Parliament some practical method of dealing with this chronic, but at the same time most urgent and pressing problem. I say that to make it abundantly clear to those who vote, as I am going to vote, with the hon. Member for Burnley, that we are in no sense indifferent to the question of finding a solution of the problem that confronts us. But I would recall the House to the fact that the real issue is not that. The real issue is, Is this House going to recognise, for the first time in the history of Parliament, this principle of the right to work and the obligation to provide work, which, once recognised, will, I venture to say, lead to conclusions little dreamt of or suspected to-day, though fully realised by some hon. Gentlemen opposite? I believe that these conclusions, if carried into practical effect, will have consequences which, in my judgment and the judgment of the Government, would prejudice no class of the community more seriously than the working class.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said he was not going to detain the House more than a minute or two. He understood that there was a general desire to come to the vote, but he was quite sure that that desire could not exist more strongly than it did with the Members with whom he was associated. He had heard nothing which would induce the Labour Party to depart from the responsibility they had taken up when they introduced this Bill at the hands of the hon. Member for St. Pancras. At the same time he did not wish it to be thought that he did not accept and recognise to a very large extent the sympathetic tone of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, and he thought that it would have been probably better for those with whom the right hon. Gentleman was associated if the same amount of sympathy and determination to deal with this great economic problem had been shown in earlier speeches Let him say that they had a right to expect more from a Liberal Government than they had given them that afternoon. This was no new question. Trade congresses and other organisations had discussed it annually for some time past; and he was astonished that no reference had been made to the decision of one Conference which represented what the hon. Member for Burnley called ten per cent. of the trade unions of the country. That Conference of the Liberal Federation Association, meeting at Newcastle in March, 1905, was attended by a large section of hon. Gentlemen sitting opposite, including the hon. Member for Burnley, and the following resolution unanimously —(the hon. Member for Burnley did not dissent from it)—passed:—

> "This Conference is of opinion that the State should create some permanent machinery applicable to the whole country for investigating and alleviating the lack of employment."

Was not this Bill an attempt to provide that machinery? [MINISTERIAL cries of No.] Someone said "No," but he thought it was an attempt to provide machinery, although it might be that the machinery was not of the same character as the mover of the Resolution, the hon. Member for Wansbeck, desired. In order to show that the Labour Party were justified in looking for something more than they had received from the Liberal Government, he desired to quote a speech made at Portsmouth on November 16th, 1905, by the Prime Minister, whose absence no one deplored more than the Labour Party, and with whose illness they all symathised. He hoped his hon. and right hon. friends above the gangway who were going to be bed-fellows, and strange bed-fellows, on this occasion with the Government, would take this quotation into their consideration. The Prime Minister then said—

> "Nothing could be more culpable than the levity with which the Government had dealt with the question last session; postponing it, and turning it into a mere vote-catching intrigue; hustling it through Parliament at the end of the session; tricking out a skeleton and putting upon it no flesh or blood. That is not the way to deal with a great and growing and vexing problem such as this, a problem which requires most delicate handling"—

(MINISTERIAL cheers.)—He thought that would be acceptable to his hon. friends opposite—

> "but which requires as little delay as possible in the handling of it."

That speech was made before the general election. Three years ago, according to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, it was necessary that this question should be dealt with as speedily as possible. Three years had gone by the Government with its great majority, and yet they were asked by the President of the Local Government Board in the most emphatic manner to wait until next year. He wondered why those gentlemen who before the general election in the name of the Liberal Party spoke of the serious character of this problem did not say "We cannot do anything with this problem until the Royal Commission appointed by our opponents has reported." If they had told them that it was a question of three years' waiting, and then another year's waiting until the Royal Commission had reported, he ventured to say that it would have had some weight in the minds of many of the working class electors at the general election. He wanted to draw the attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite to the position they were getting into in regard to this question. They were going to have in the lobby with them the whole of the Protectionist Party. (An HON. MEMBER: "How do you know?") He came to the conclusion that they were all going to be loyal to the whips they had received, and therefore when the right hon. Member for South Dublin told the House that he was going to vote against the Bill, he presumed that his followers would go with him. This matter had created a great stir in the London Press, and there was an article in one leading London paper which concluded as follows:—

> "In the background is the haunting question, 'Why should such a Bill as this ever be demanded in Free Trade England?'"

Yet they were going into the lobby together. The article proceeded:—

> "Even free traders must allow that the problem of the unemployed is urgent and grave, but the true remedy for it is to be found in fairer conditions for British people and British industry, and not in any wild cat measure."

He could imagine that some of their protectionist friends had a thought in the back of their minds that, in the interests of protection, it was advisable for them to get this Bill out of the way, and that they should assist the Government in their policy of inaction on the question. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why?] Because there had been three or four bye-elections in the last few months which had been injurious to the Government. What had the Members of the Opposition who went down to those bye-elections been doing? They had preached protection as the only solution for the unemployment from which the electors were suffering, and it was their business to prevent the Government from doing anything to recover the lost ground with the working classes. He was surprised that the Government had not more political insight than to play into the hands of their opponents.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Hear, hear.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON: Yes, the junior captain of the host was endorsing his opinion. Birmingham was with him on the point. Let him say, as his final word, that the Government could not have played a better card to assist protection. They did not like protection, and they did not like Socialism, but they could not have played a better card to assist both.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.

The House divided:—Ayes, 116; Noes, 265. (Division List No. 40.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Atherley-Jones, L.
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William

Branch, James
Brodie, H. C.
Cameron, Robert
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cooper, G. J.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dickinson,W.H.(St. Pancras,N
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Hart-Davies, T.
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lea,Hugh Cecil(St. Pancras,E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal, E.)
M Laren,Sir C. B. (Leicester)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Scott,A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe
Thomas,DavidAlred(Merthyr
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Toulmin, George
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Wardle, George J.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr George Roberts and Mr. John Ward.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Acland-Hood,RtHn.SirAlex.F.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Arnold-Forster,Rt.Hn.HughO.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hn. HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hn. Sir H.
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(City Lond.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beauchamp, E.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton,Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cave, George
Cavendish,Rt.Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt Hn.J.A(Worc.
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clark,George Smith (Belfast,N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,C.H(Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth
Craik, Sir Henry
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dalziel, James Henry
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn

Glen-Coats,Sir T.(Renfrew, W
Gordon, J.
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gretton, John
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Grove, Archibald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haldane‘ Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L.Caithn'ss-sh.
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson,J.M. (Aberdeen,W.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hunt, Rowland
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones,Sir D. Brynmor(Swansea
Keswick, William
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lamont, Norman
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lee,Arthur H. (Hants,Fareham
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Long,Rt.Hn. Walter (Dublin,S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
Maddison, Frederick
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, J.Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholson,Charles N (Doncast'r
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk,Eye)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Percy, Earl
Perks, Robert William
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price,Robert John Norfolk,E.)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson,John FrederickPeel
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts,John H. (Denbighs.)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos.Myles
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Sheffield,SirBerkeleyGeorge D.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, AbelH. (Hertford,East)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas,Abel (Carmarthen, E.
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E. (Clackmann'n
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
Whitbread, Howard
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. Fuller.

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House divided:—Ayes, 241; Noes, 95. (Division List No. 41.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Acland-Hood,RtHn.SirAlex.F.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Arnold-Forster,Rt.Hn.Hugh O
Astbury, John Meir
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hon.Sir H
Balfour,Rt. Hn.A.J.(City Lond
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beauchamp, E.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn

Burdett-Coutts, W.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton,Rt. Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cavendish.Rt.Hon.Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.
Chamberlain,Rt Hn.J.A.(Worc
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clark,George Smith (Belfast,N
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins,Sir Hm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,C H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dalziel, James Henry
Dewar, Sir J. A.(Inverness-sh.)
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Gordon, J.
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Grove, Archibald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harrison, Broadley, H. B.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson,J. M.(Aberdeen,W.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hunt, Rowland
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Keswick, William
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King, Sir HenrySeymour(Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lever, A. Levy(Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin, S
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
Maddison, Frederick
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nicholson, Wm.G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Price, C.E. (Edinb'gh, Central
Price,Robert John (Norfolk, E
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sandys,Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Stanley,HnA. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Talbot,Rt.Hn J.G.(Oxf'd Univ.
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thornton, Percy M.
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.HnE. (Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Whitbread, Howard
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J.(York, W. R.)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C.B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley, and Mr. Fuller.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Alden, Percy
Atherley-Jones, L.
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,Sir J.H (Essex,Romf'rd
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brodie, H. C.
Cameron, Robert
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cooper, G. J.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dickinson,W.H(St.PancrasNW
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ffrench, Peter
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Hart-Davies, T.
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hudson, Walter
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs)
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Money, L. G Chiozza
Murphy, John (Kerry,East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Joseph
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards,Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards,T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Scott,A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,DavidAlfred (Merthyr
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset, E
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Roberts and John Ward.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House, while ready to consider any practical proposal for dealing with the evil of unemployment, cannot entertain a measure which, by wasting the resources of the nation, would throw out of work more persons than it could assist and would destroy the power of organised labour, but hopes that the Government will give immediate consideration to the recommendations in the forthcoming Report of the Poor Law Commission so far as they deal with unemployment.

EXPORTATION OF OLD HORSES BILL.

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added the following Members to Standing Committee A (in respect of the Polling Districts (County Councils), Education (Local Authorities), and Incest Bills): Mr. William O'Brien and Mr. Kavanagh.

Report to lie upon the Table.

SWINTON AND MEXBROUGH GAS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

HOURS OF LABOUR BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon Friday, 1st May read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 16*th March*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways [H.L.].

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—Cambrian Railways—(Petition for Bill).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Standing Orders Committee.—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction; and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed, provided that a clause be inserted in the Bill to the following effect, viz.:—That no sale of the amalgamated undertaking shall take place without the consent of the Memorialists Charles William Bartholomew, Richard Donald Bain, and William Howard Gray, which does not provide for the payment to the said Memorialists of the sum of at least £5,000 in cash in respect of the debenture stock mentioned in Section 4 of the Act of 1901, or in respect of the stock of the new Company incorporated by the Bill to be exchanged therefore under the provisions of the said Bill.

Read, and agreed to.

Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]—Reported from the Select Committee, with amendments.

Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed for Wednesday next.

Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [H.L.]—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, 1907, VOL. XLII., PART II).

Returns of produce of crops in Great Britain, with summaries for the United Kingdom.

EMIGRATION.

Report on the Emigrants' Information Office, for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Board of Education—(Education Bill, 1908)—Print of the enactments proposed to be amended or repealed in the schedules to the Bill. (Welsh Department)—Regulations and conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education under Section 48 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, of elementary schools in Wales and Monmouthshire (being neither public elementary schools nor schools applying for recognition under any other Act of Parliament) as certified efficient schools.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 27th February, 1908, amending the terms of Paragraph 2 of the Minute of 27th April, 1899, providing for the distribution of the sum available for secondary or technical (including agricultural) education under the Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1898.

CHARITY COMMISSION

Fifty-fifth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Report and tables for the year 1907.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (SUPPLEMENT TO ANNUAL REPORT OF CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR 1906).

Returns of persons employed in 1904, in non-textile factories, and summary of annual reports of Medical Officers of Health for 1906.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894.

Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908:—Applying Section 238 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, to deserters from Roumanian ships; and Revoking the Order in Council of 2nd November, 1907, relating to the same subject.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Orders in Council approving memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty praying sanction to:—The continuance of payment of command money heretofore paid to the Captains of the Gunnery Schools at Sheerness and Devonport, and allowances to gunners at those schools on their amalgamation with the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham and Devonport; Improvements in the pay and position of commissioned warrant officers and warrant officers, and in the pensions of chief and head schoolmasters in His Majesty's Navy; The payment of prize money for proficiency in torpedo practice; Certain modifications in the rules respecting allowances for gunnery and torpedo and the application to men in the service of the regulations abolishing re-engaged pay.

SPRING ASSIZES ACT, 1879.

Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908, constituting Spring Assize Counties, Nos. 2 and 3, for the purpose of the ensuing Spring Assizes.

SHERIFF COURTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1907.

Act of Sederunt, regulating the fees payable in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland, and prescribing the form of books of account to be kept by Sheriff Clerks.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF ESSEX).

Order made by the council of the county of Essex altering certain polling districts in the Mid or Chelmsford Parliamentary Division.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904 (WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE).

Order made by the council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the Sowerby Bridge Urban District.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 15th March, 1908, granting a retired allowance to James Ranyard Lee, First Class Attendant, British Museum, under Section 2 of the Superannuation Act.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

OFFICIAL SECRETS BILL [H.L.].

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Loreburn): My Lords, I beg to move the First Reading of a Bill to amend the Official Secrets Act, 1889. I desire to say only two or three sentences in connection with it. The Bill relates to the difficult subject of official secrets—that is to say, documents and information which it is contrary to the public interest should be made public. The Bill will be circulated at once, and will, therefore, be immediately available to your Lordships. I take this notice of it on First Reading because I hope that in the interval before the Second Reading those who are interested in this subject will be so good as to pay attention to it, in order that we may have it thoroughly considered and discussed on the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1^a."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Bill read 1^a, and to be printed (No. 28).

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Lord EVERSLEY moved an Amendment providing that the Act might be adopted, not "for any borough," but for "any metropolitan borough" by a resolution of the council, passed by a majority of three-fifths of the members present and voting. He said that on the Second Reading of the Bill he had ventured to point out the very great difference between provincial councils and metropolitan councils. In the case of the latter the elections were triennial, the whole of the councillors being elected every three years, and it undoubtedly did happen occasionally that all the councillors elected were of the same way of thinking. But in the provincial boroughs one-third of the councillors retired each year, and in almost every case the boroughs were divided into wards returning three members each; the result was that one member in each ward retired annually. His noble friend Lord Courtney would admit that his scheme would not work to the best advantage in a constituency returning only three members; it was framed mainly for constituencies returning five or more members, and there undoubtedly was something to be said for giving an opportunity to the minority to return a member. In the case of a three-member constituency the scheme would work out not very differently from that of the cumulative vote or the arrangement made in the Act of 1867 for three-cornered constituencies in Parliamentary elections. In those cases the minority had an opportunity of returning one member, and he thought if it were desirable to give an opportunity for the election of a minority member in a constituency returning three members then the cumulative vote or the scheme in the Act of 1867—namely, that of giving two votes instead of three to each elector—would work very much simpler and better than the elaborate scheme proposed in this Bill. Not a single witness who appeared before the Select Committee on this Bill made any complaint in respect of provincial boroughs. The evidence was to the effect that the system of election now in existence, whereby one-third of the members retired annually, gave general satisfaction, and the Municipal Corporations Association, representing the corporations throughout the country, were unanimous in favour of the existing system and against that proposed in Lord Courtney's Bill. He thought, therefore, the weight of authority was very greatly against extending the Bill to provincial boroughs. The effect of his Amendment would be to confine it to metropolitan boroughs.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 10, to leave out the words 'any borough' and to insert the words 'any metropolitan borough.'"—(*Lord Eversley.*)

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH hoped their Lordships would not entertain the Amendment. His noble friend had been very brief in his explanation of the Amendment; so brief that he had left out one most important fact in connection with it. Lord Eversley had forgotten to remind their Lordships that this was a permissive Bill. It enabled boroughs to adopt the alternative scheme if so disposed, but the effect of the Amendment would be to provide that metropolitan boroughs might adopt the scheme, but provincial boroughs might not. It was admitted that the case of the provincial boroughs was not so strong as that of the metropolitan boroughs; but, nevertheless, it was not so weak as his noble friend supposed. There was evidence of the imperfection of the working of the present system in the country boroughs, and he had had representations from one or two provincial boroughs with respect to the application of the Bill to the provinces. He had even received communications from Scotland and Ireland asking for the extension of the Bill to those countries; but he would not dwell upon that point. He hoped their Lordships would not curtail the freedom allowed by the Bill to municipal bodies generally to adopt for their elections a system of proportional representation.

LORD ASHBOURNE, while admitting the force of what had been said by Lord Eversley, thought there was a good deal in the point brought out by Lord Courtney that this was a permissive and not a compulsory Bill. As the measure was an experimental one he thought it desirable that it should be left in its present elastic form, and he hoped Lord Eversley would be satisfied with having made his protest.

LORD BELPER, as Chairman of the Select Committee, said the Committee had fully before them all the circumstances mentioned by Lord Eversley, but it was to be remembered that this was, after all, to be an experiment. Many of the provincial boroughs might not care about trying it, and therefore no harm would be done; but if any of them wished to try it, why should they be prevented? He thought it would be rather unreasonable to cut them out of trying the experiment if they wished to do so. The Committee certainly made no proposal to limit the Bill in the way proposed, and he hoped the noble Lord would not press the Amendment.

LORD AVEBURY also opposed the Amendment. Lord Eversley had said that in the country districts there was ample protection for the minority, but he did not explain how that came about. Let their Lordships imagine an election in a provincial constituency where one side had a majority. They carried their candidate one year, the next year the same majority returned another candidate, and the third year the same majority again returned their man. Therefore, although the majority might be a comparatively small one, it secured the whole of the representation. Lord Eversley had expressed the opinion that if this Bill were extended to the provinces, the cumulative vote or the three-cornered system would be preferable to the system set out in the Bill; but he could assure their Lordships that there was hardly anyone who had studied this question and was in favour of proportional representation who did not believe that the system in the Bill was preferable.

LORD ALLENDALE said that if the Bill was adopted, the Local Government Board were of opinion that there was no reason why the provincial boroughs should not have the same freedom of making a choice as the metropolitan boroughs. The Local Government Board were not aware that there was any great demand for the Bill, but if the Amendment was carried it would necessitate many alterations of a consequential character. In these circumstances he hoped that the noble Lord would withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH moved an Amendment in the same clause providing that the Act might be continued in force for any borough by a further resolution of the council passed within six months before the expiration of the further period of three years by a majority of the members present and voting: "and after any such further resolution this Act shall remain in force without any limitation of time." He explained that this Amendment and the other Amendments standing in his name hung together, and were simply intended to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee. It was thought that the Bill in its present shape failed to do so exactly. The Amendments fully carried out, in the opinion of Lord Belper, its Chairman, the intentions of the Select Committee.

Amendment moved.

"In page 1, line 21, to leave out from the word 'voting' to the end of the subsection, and to insert the words 'and after any such further resolution this Act shall remain in force without any limitation of time.'"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

LORD BELPER said this Amendment and the others standing in the name of Lord Courtney were for the purpose, as the noble Lord had stated, of bringing the Bill in conformity with the scheme recommended by the Select Committee. Therefore their Lordships could safely accept them.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 21, after Subsection (7) to insert the following new Subsection: (8) When this Act ceases to be in force in any borough, one-third of the councillors of which would, but for the adoption of this Act, have retired every year, the particular councillors to retire on the two ordinary days of election next after this Act ceases to be in force shall be determined by lot, in such manner as the mayor may prescribe.'"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3:

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, lines 25 and 26, to leave out the words 'expiration of six months from the passing of the resolution,' and to insert the words 'adoption of this Act.'"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 4."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to, and Bill reported, with Amendments, to the House.

Re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 29.)

SMALL HOLDINGS.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, I rise to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the fact that the sum of £100,000 is placed to the Small Holdings Account and at the disposal of the Board up to 31st March next, with the prospect of further grants from the Imperial Exchequer in succeeding financial years, the Board have it in contemplation to take any proceedings under Section 16 of the Small Holdings Act, 1907, to demonstrate the feasibility of the establishment of small holdings in some parts of England where they do not at present exist; also whether the regulations laying down the conditions under which financial assistance will be given to county councils towards the costs of valuation, and the expenses of a local inquiry, etc., promised in the Board's Circular of 1st January, 1908, have yet been issued.

Your Lordships will recollect that one of the principal objects which the noble Earl declared that the Board of Agriculture had in mind was the institution of experiments in different parts of England in small holdings where small holdings did not then exist. That, I think, was founded on the Report of the Departmental Committee, and, inasmuch as a considerable sum of money will be at the disposal of the Board, I am in hopes that the noble Earl the President will be able to inform your Lordships that it is their intention to make use of some portion, at any rate, of that money in the direction I have indicated. Your Lordships will remember that one of the objects of the Act was to stimulate county councils who appeared to be somewhat disinclined to carry out the duties imposed upon them by the Act. I think it will be found that there will be many county councils who will not be very desirous of entering into rash experiments, lest it would involve a charge on the rates; and therefore I very much hope that, wherever the noble Earl finds there is that disinclination and where his Commissioners and the Board report to him that in their belief an experiment might be tried with success, he will be inclined to try the experiment with the funds at the disposal of the Board provided by the Treasury rather than compel county councils to undertake work which they may think will throw a burden on the ratepayers. With regard to the second part of my Question, I merely wish to know whether the regulations have been issued, and, if not, how soon they will be sent out. There is a great deal of anxiety on the part of county councils to know in what position they stand in the matter.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, in answer to the Question of my noble friend, the House will be glad to hear that, so far as we can make out at present, there will be no difficulty whatever in making experiments with regard to small holdings. The county councils and landowners generally are meeting us in every possible way, and there is every reason to thank them for the zeal and energy they are showing. Of course, the Small Holdings Act of last Session has been in operation for hardly twelve weeks yet, and the preliminary inquiries are not yet complete, but it is hoped very soon to ascertain the approximate demands of the country, and then we must find out how far the demands are genuine, and how many of the applicants are of the right sort. A great many have already applied, and in Kent, Lord Darnley, the chairman of the committee of that county, reports that 134 applicants have been interviewed, and he and his committee were enabled to approve of 119 at once. Up to this morning 141,008 acres, or 236 square miles, had been applied for. There are over 9,000 applicants on the list, and the applications are coming in every day. In referring to the support which county councils have received from landowners, perhaps I might be allowed specially to mention Lord Dartmouth and Lord Harewood, whose action has been prominently brought before the Board; and also the Marquess of Anglesey and Lord Boston, who have rendered great assistance in this direction in North Wales. I hope that in the next few years thousands, if not tens of thousands, of hard-working, industrious men will be making an honest and, I hope, a profitable livelihood on the land. As regards the second question, the regulations referred to have not yet been issued, but we are in communication with the Treasury on the subject.

Earl ROSEBERY: I am exceedingly glad to hear from my noble friend his unsolicited tribute to the zeal, energy, and intelligence shown by the English county councils. I suppose he is not prepared at this moment to state off-hand, in behalf of the Government, their reasons for thinking that the Scottish county councils would act differently if they had the powers.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The Scottish county councils are, under the Bill which unfortunately was rejected by your Lordships the other day, not included because what that Bill was concerned with was taxes, whereas under the English Act it is rates.

Earl ROSEBERY: I am obliged to the noble and learned Lord for his explanation, and would only point out that under the Bill of Lord Camperdown, still before your Lordships, the Scottish county councils are so entrusted.

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

*__The Earl of DARTMOUTH__: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War the following Questions: (1) How many of the 15-pounder guns for the armament of the Territorial Force have now been converted. What further number will be available for distribution at the end of the month; (2) what County Associations have already been supplied with a gun or guns; and (3) in what order will guns be supplied to other County Associations? There is a subsequent question which has recently been brought to my attention, and of which I have given the noble Earl the Under-Secretary private notice—it relates to riding schools. I am informed by one of those gentlemen who have most patriotically come forward to raise a battery of field artillery in my county that it is absolutely necessary that the men should be taught in a riding school; and my own scanty knowledge of horsemanship certainly suggests that in the early stages privacy is of some advantage. I do not know whether anything has been settled, but I hope the noble Earl will be able to answer my Question, namely, whether, if riding schools are necessary, assistance will be given to the County Associations to provide them.

With regard to the guns for the armament of the Territorial Force, the noble Earl told us the other night that the distribution would depend on the rapidity with which garrison artillery are converted into field artillery. Since that answer was given we have had an interesting debate raised by my noble friend below me, Lord Midleton, in the course of which the opinion of Lord Wolseley was quoted. We also had a very interesting speech from the noble and gallant Field-Marshal on the cross benches, Lord Roberts, and this morning there is a letter in *The Times* from Lord Denbigh, who has had considerable experience in connection with the Honourable Artillery Company. All these opinions go to prove that there are considerable difficulties awaiting those who are contemplating the creation of a large force of artillery on the conditions proposed, and that badly-trained artillery might be even an actual danger. I do not wish to question what has been said. I have no experience to justify my doing so, but, speaking as a representative of a County Association, I do realise that one of the heaviest duties which has been imposed upon us is the raising of this force; and, if the Government insist on our endeavouring to raise this large number of men, we shall want all possible assistance from the military authorities. One of the districts in my own county, which we had looked upon as promising ground for raising a battery of field artillery, has, as a result of the debate in your Lordships' House the other day, come to the conclusion that it is most undesirable to raise a force which might be "a positive danger." That is the difficulty in which we are placed.

The point I particularly wish to emphasise in regard to the distribution of guns is this. We are told that the distribution will depend on the rapidity with which garrison artillery are converted into field artillery. I am informed by an officer of considerable experience who will command the brigade in the north of my county, and who has to raise 23 officers and 919 men, that he cannot get the men to convert, or secure recruits, until they get the guns. The guns are not to be given till the men are converted or raised, but the men will not convert or join until they get the guns. The men are hesitating because they have been frequently promised that the new guns are to be given to them; those promises have been so often falsified that the men do not believe in the new guns at all. I am told that one of the converted 15-pounders was seen to-day in the vicinity of your Lordships' House. I did not see it, but I understand it was on view. I hope the guns will be distributed to the County Associations as soon as possible. The Artillery Volunteers have always been handicapped in this way, and I hear that they are threatened with having to do this year's training with the old guns—guns which were old when they were distributed nineteen years ago. If some thing is not done speedily it will be quite impossible for the County Associations to raise the numbers expected of them.

I do not know how far the noble Earl has influence with the Government he represents, but I should like, on behalf of the County Associations, to suggest that he and his colleagues should be a little careful about the legislation they introduce. In one district in my county the people are unable to think of anything but the Licensing Bill and what its results in that particular locality will be, and as we had hoped to raise a considerable number of men of various Arms from that district we are again considerably handicapped. If the noble Earl could induce his colleagues to be a little more careful about what they do in regard to general legislation it would be very much better for the Territorial Force. In Staffordshire we have five excellent battalions, one of which will have to go, and it is difficult to say which ought to be sacrificed. A Report was drawn up as long ago as the end of January, but it is still somewhere in the War Office; no one in the county has heard anything of the matter since. I would point out that it is essential that it should be known which particular unit is to be disbanded. We have had instructions from the War Office as to the character of the flag which we who double the part of President of the County Association and Lord-Lieutenant may fly, and as to the character of the cuff to be worn by deputy-Lieutenants when in undress uniform. These are very interesting, but they are not, if I may venture to say so, essential to the success of this scheme, and I think it is more important that these unfortunate men who are to be disbanded should be given that information before we interest our selves with regard to minor points.

EARL FORTESCUE: Before the noble Earl replies, I should like to put to him one or two Questions of which I have given him private notice. First, I should like to ask whether the equitation allowance of £1 will be given to mounted men of the Territorial Artillery as well as to the Yeomanry. The desirability of this is obvious. The artillery driver is more skilled than the Yeoman, and if one is deserving of the equitation allowance the other is deserving also. We are not to be allowed, as I understand, to enlist in the new

Territorial batteries, artillerymen who are in the Reserve. Therefore, we shall have to rely for drivers either on civilians or on men who have left the artillery for five years at least, and who probably in that time will have got pretty rusty. I hope, therefore, the noble Earl will be able to tell us that the equitation allowance will be granted to all mounted men in the Territorial Artillery. I hope he will be able to tell us, also, that the guns of ordinary batteries when they are issued will be issued complete with a suitable proportion of range finders and signalling apparatus of all kinds. Officers tell me that it is impossible to train a battery properly unless these appliances are there with the guns. Next, I should like to ask whether the compensation for loss of horses announced by the Secretary of State on Thursday, will be given under the same conditions as those stated in the existing Yeomanry Regulations, Paragraphs 303 and 304; and whether veterinary expenses, which are laid down in Paragraph 308 of the Yeomanry Regulations, will still be allowed.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I should like to put to the noble Earl before he rises to reply, a question concerning the Volunteer regiment in the north of England, which I have the honour to command. We have converted ourselves from heavy garrison artillery into field artillery, and I gather, from what the noble Earl said the other day, that those regiments that most speedily convert themselves into field artillery will be the first to receive the guns. In the county with which I am connected we have already formed our three field artillery batteries with headquarters at our own drill hall. The question I wish to ask the noble Earl is this, when can we hope to be provided with modern guns? We have loyally undertaken the new duties in our desire to support the Territorial scheme, but there must obviously be a certain amount of lukewarmness until we get the guns.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of PORTSMOUTH): Will the noble Marquess tell me the name of his corps?

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: The 2nd Durham Artillery Volunteers.

*THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: Before the noble Earl replies I should like to say that I hope he will take care that the noble Marquess does not get more than one gun before the other County Associations get their guns.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: My Lords, I think it would be as well if, at the outset of my reply, I give the information which I promised to Lord Midleton. The figures for the Reserve of the Royal Horse and Field Artillery on 1st March last were as follows: Total Royal Horse Artillery Reserve, 1,707; total Royal Field Artillery Reserve, 9,815; combined total, 11,522.

In reply to Lord Dartmouth I have to say that forty-eight 15-pounder guns have been converted and are now being inspected and issued as rapidly as possible. Conversion of these guns is proceeding at the rate of about nine a week. Twelve guns have been issued to twelve brigades in the Western and Scottish Commands. These have been allotted, on the recommendation of the general officers commanding-in-chief, one each to the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th Lancashire Garrison Artillery, and one each to the 1st Shropshire and Staffordshire Garrison Artillery, the 1st Forfar, the 1st Aberdeen, the 1st Lanark, the 1st Mid Lothian, and the 1st Ayr and Galloway Garrison Artillery. In addition to these, orders have already been given to issue one gun each to the 1st, 2nd, and 4th West Yorkshire Garrison Artillery, the 1st Cardigan, the 1st Monmouthshire, the 1st Cheshire, the 2nd East Riding of Yorkshire, the 1st Durham, and the 1st Northumberland Artillery. The issues will be continued at the rate of at least six guns a week, and if possible nine a week, but the general order of the units to which these issues will be made will be governed by the information furnished by the general officer commanding-in-chief of the command in which the unit is located.

As to the provision of riding schools for the training of men and horses for field artillery, expenditure of that kind, as in the case of drill halls, ranges, gun sheds, etc., will be met by grants from Army Funds, wherever the Army Council consider such provision necessary for the proper discharge of the functions of the Association. For instance, if the acquisition on lease or other agreement of property of this kind is sanctioned by the Army Council, a grant would be made on the basis of the rent for which the Association is liable. I gathered from the remarks of my noble friend that he had some complaint on the ground of having received no reply from the War Office as to the five existing Infantry units in Staffordshire, one of which is to be disbanded. I am afraid that in regard to this matter there must be some misunderstanding. I have made inquiries, and I cannot trace that any reply is due from the War Office to my noble friend on this subject. I presume that my noble friend drew up a report for the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the northern command, and he, in the ordinary course, would embody that report in the statement forwarded to the War Office in regard to the whole of his command. Any reply from the War Office would be sent to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, who is the proper person to communicate with my noble friend, and to whom in regard to this matter I must refer him. All I have been able to ascertain is that the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Northern Command was informed on 3rd March that he might inform the County Associations of the allotment of units.

As regards Staffordshire, it is proposed that there shall be four infantry battalions of 1,000 strong under the new organisation, instead of the existing five. This will necessitate the amalgamation of two of the existing battalions into one after 31st March, and this duty will devolve upon the County Association. Lord Fortescue has asked whether the capitation allowance of £1 will be given to the mounted men of the Territorial Artillery as well as to the Yeomanry. I understand that the answer to that is no. The second Question asked by Lord Fortescue was whether the compensation for loss of a horse, which has been announced, will be given under the same conditions as those stated in the existing Yeomanry Regulations. New Regulations are about to be issued, but I am not able to speak definitely upon them because they have not yet received Treasury sanction. The maximum compensation for the loss of a horse will be £40. My noble friend's third Question was whether veterinary expenses would be allowed. No allowance beyond £5 will be allowed for veterinary expenses.

*THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: [I should like to explain the object of my last Question, which was not on the Paper. I had no intention of bringing any complaint against the War Office. I am reserving complaints for a future time. I quite understood that we who represent the County Associations were to indicate the battalion to be disbanded or merged, and that that information was to go, in the first place, to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief. In this case that was done; we drew up the Report together. But when I went to the War Office I was told that the Report of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief was somewhere in the building. I now gather that it is by the allocation of units, about which we have been inundated with telegrams during the last few weeks, that the disbanded battalion is to be merged, and we shall get no formal intimation as to which it is to be. As to the guns, I gather from the noble Earl's Answer that one gun has been allotted to Shropshire and Staffordshire. By this scheme these counties have been divided, and I am afraid Shropshire has got the gun. Can the noble Earl tell me whether the gun has gone to the Shropshire side?

[No Answer was returned.]

EARL FORTESCUE: The noble Earl has not answered my Question as to whether range finders and signalling apparatus will be supplied with the guns.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: If the noble Earl will give me notice of any Questions I will give him an Answer.

*The Earl of DARTMOUTH: Where is my gun? Cannot the noble Earl tell me whether Shropshire has got it.

The Earl of PORTSMOUTH: I believe Shropshire has got it.

The Earl of DONOUGHMORE: I rise to ask the Under-Secretary to take one matter into consideration. The Earl of Dartmouth stated that he believed one of these guns had been seen to-day in the precincts of your Lordships' House. That was not so. The gun was supplied for the inspection of Members of the other House, and I rise to ask the noble Earl if he will give us an opportunity of seeing what Members of the other House have been able to see. Very many of your Lordships are desirous of seeing this gun, and I would also suggest that one of the new quick firers should be sent down at the same time in order that we may compare them. A similar request was made in the House of Commons, but the Secretary of State replied that the new quick-firing gun could not be got into Palace Yard, and therefore he was unable to show it to Members of the House of Commons. It need not go near Palace Yard in being brought down for the inspection of your Lordships, and I therefore hope that we shall be allowed an opportunity of seeing and comparing these guns.

The Earl of PORTSMOUTH: I will communicate at once with the military authorities and see what can be done in the matter.

LADY CATHCART AND HER TENANTS.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I rise to ask when the correspondence between Lady Cathcart and the Secretary for Scotland and the Lord-Advocate will be presented; and what has occasioned the delay in circulating the letters. I moved for this correspondence on 6th February, and late in that month I asked Lord Hamilton of Dalzell when the letters would be presented, and he replied that they were with the printers. The ordinary meaning of the answer which the noble Lord was directed to give to me was that we were to have the correspondence in two or three days. As the Return had not come to hand, and as there was no information to be obtained from the Scottish Office, I thought it as well to inquire of the printer, and he informed me that he had returned the correspondence to the Scottish Office on 18th February in print. Therefore for a month these letters have been undergoing a process of incubation in the Scottish Office, for what purpose the Secretary for Scotland alone knows. It was stated in another place that permission had been asked of the County Council of Inverness to publish some document. What connection the Inverness County Council can have with a correspondence which took place between Lady Cathcart and the Secretary for Scotland I do not at present understand. If we ever get the Papers I suppose we shall see; but, in the meanwhile, I should like to know why all this delay has taken place.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, in answer to the noble Earl I beg to state that the correspondence is actually in the hands of the printer, who will be told to use all possible expedition in printing it. The delay which has occurred has arisen owing to the following circumstances. As the correspondence referred to transactions extending over a period of years it was thought advisable to print with it certain illustrative documents. It was therefore necessary to consider what documents should be included in the correspondence to be presented, and to ascertain whether all such documents were available for publication. A further delay was occasioned by a question being asked on 26th February, in another place, as to whether the Secretary for Scotland would include in this correspondence the Report of a Committee which had been appointed by the County Council of Invernesshire to consider whether land should be take for allotments in the island of Vatersay. These are the reasons for the delay. As I have already stated, the Papers will very shortly be laid on the Table of the House.

THE ARMY.

Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of Viscount Midleton that an humble

Address be presented to His Majesty for any Minute of the Army Council approving the further reduction in the numbers of the Regular Artillery, and the Report for 1907 of the late Inspector-General of the Forces so far as it affects "the training and efficiency of the troops under the control of the Home Government, and the readiness and fitness of the Army for war."

*LORD LUCAS: My Lords, the debate of last Thursday covered practically the whole ground of the reforms which are at present being carried out in the Regular Army and in what are at present the Auxiliary Forces. But perhaps I may be allowed to trespass on your Lordships time in an endeavour to reply to one or two of the chief points brought forward in Thursday's debate. The point most reiterated in that debate was that of the present strength of the Army as shown by the Return on the Table. Attention was called by Lord Midleton to the strength of the Army as revealed in that Return; but, with a true perception of the causes of the existing weakness of the Army, he did not attach the blame for that to the present Government as was done by subsequent speakers. I must say I thought the noble Earl the Under-Secretary provided a very complete answer on that point, but it did not deter other speakers from repeating the attack.

If I may be allowed to do so, I would give your Lordships the figures showing how the three years system has affected the particular battalion—the 2nd Durham Light Infantry—which was singled out by Lord Midleton. The three years system was in force from April, 1902, until October, 1904, and that meant that from April, 1905, to October, 1907, not only were the seven years men of from 1898 to 1900 passing into the Reserve, but also the three years men. There was a double drain going on at the same time, and the way in which that affected the battalion in question is shown by the following figures referring to rank and file. In February, 1904, the strength, not including recruits at the depot, was 701, and there were 442 men over twenty years of age. There were at that time 455 three years men in the battalion. The draft required for India in that year was 155; the following year it was about the same. At that time 137 three years men had had to go out to India. In 1905 the three years men began passing out; in 1906 the strength had fallen from 701, two years previously, to 562. The number of men over twenty years of age had fallen to 348, and the draft that had to be sent out had risen to 209 men. The following year the strength fell to 461; the draft requirements rose to 290, and the battalion was unable to meet them all. The men over twenty in the battalion were only 241. The draft required this year was 257, and 232 men have gone, the actual number of rank and file over twenty left being 56. Fortunately we have now passed the worst time, because the three years men are done with and we are gradually climbing up again.

The attack made last week upon the policy of the expeditionary force of 160,000 men was not so much in reference to the size of the force as to the doubt if the number could be realised. I may here parenthetically remark, with regard to a point raised by the Duke of Bedford, that the actuaries do not count as passing to the Reserve every man who enters as a recruit; they took the actual number in normal conditions—estimated over a long period of years and it works out at roughly, one out of every two recruits. The calculations are made on the establishments, and it is quite possible that the number will not be forthcoming; but I cannot see how Lord Midleton's proposal to add 10,000 of the three years men would improve matters. He says, I think rightly, that you can sometimes raise three years men when you cannot raise seven years men. How far the raising of three years men interferes with the getting of seven years men is a question that is difficult to decide offhand. But suppose you do not get sufficient recruits to give you the full 160,000 men, surely you are not going to make things better by increasing your establishments and asking for more recruits still. As I have shown in the case of the Durham Light Infantry, the strength fell so greatly below the establishment that the reducing of the establishment was a mere paper transaction which did not affect the strength of the Army.

I maintain that the reductions in the strength of the Regular Army which have been the subject of so much criticism can only fairly be considered in relation to the whole scheme of Army reform. The idea of an expeditionary force is not a new one, as was indicated in Mr. Wyndham's letter to *The Times* of last Saturday, in which it is stated that the noble Marquess opposite also had the idea of organising the whole of the troops at home into a large expeditionary force of about the same size as the expeditionary force which Mr. Haldane proposes to organise; and at the outbreak of the South African War we had to despatch about the number the noble Marquess proposes to organise. Having sent that expeditionary force abroad we then were compelled to raise new units of every sort. Fifty-six new batteries of field artillery were raised, and numerous expedients were resorted to in regard to infantry. Those units had to perform double functions—to train drafts for South Africa, and at the same time to provide for home defence.

VISCOUNT HARDINGE: What about the Militia?

*LORD LUCAS: I speak under correction, but apparently the Militia was not considered adequate defence for the country at that time. As I say, you were calling upon these units to perform double functions—to train drafts for South Africa, and at the same time to provide for home defence. Fortunately they were not required to discharge the latter duty. Experience of the South African War shows that when you have a force abroad you must also have the machinery in this country for training drafts. This is one of the advantages of the new scheme that may be said to have been bought by the reductions made in the Regular Army. It is a great asset from a military point of view that for the first time in the history of this country we shall be free from the necessity of having to improvise in the face of the enemy.

There is another point of view from which we ought to look at these reductions. It was argued on Thursday that if you reduce infantry battalions you thereby reduce the value as a fighting machine of your Regular Army. As a matter of fact the value from a purely military and fighting point of view of an infantry battalion *per se* is a very indefinite thing. It may be of no more use to you than a bottle of Worcester sauce would be if you had no cold mutton to eat it with. It is fair to regard these reductions from the point of view of divisions, and not from that of single units. The noble Duke, the Duke of Bedford, on Thursday drew a lurid picture of the position of a battalion coming out of action with only 300 men and having to be filled up with 700 or 800 Special Reservists. He asked what would be the fighting value of that unit. That raises a very important point, but it only touches on the fringe of it. I believe the usual military procedure in the case of a battalion which has incurred disaster and been cut up is to send it down the lines of communication, and replace it by another battalion. The noble Duke spoke of the men not knowing one another. But what about generals commanding divisions not knowing the officers under them, not knowing who are trustworthy and who are rash, not knowing the men who are slow and those who are quick? That is a part of military organisation to which no attention has been given hitherto. It is not the object of Army organisation to produce a number of single units; but hitherto the British Army has always gone out to fight as a scratch crew. In South Africa there was only one brigade whose units had trained together in peace time. If a proper organisation and a training machine for the army in the field can be secured, the country will have obtained an important military asset very cheaply at the price of these reductions.

I pass to the speech of the noble and gallant Field-Marshal on the cross benches. I think anyone reading that speech could not fail to interpret it as a sweeping condemnation of the whole idea and the whole principle of the Territorial Force. The noble and gallant Field-Marshal confined his remarks to the artillery, but I think he will agree that what he said about the artillery applied equally to the other branches of the Territorial Army.

EARL ROBERTS: No, certainly not. The artillery is the most scientific branch, and requires a training that is not necessary to the other branches to the same extent. You might raise infantry quickly if you had the officers, but you could not do that with artillery. In saying that, I was supported, not only by artillery officers, but by every officer in this country who has seen service. I hope it will not be thought that I was condemning the whole of the Territorial Army. I thought the framework of that Army was what we wanted, but you must fill it up properly, and you cannot fill it properly with untrained artillery.

*LORD LUCAS: Would the noble and gallant Field-Marshal say that a fortnight's annual training is enough for cavalry having to operate in the most difficult country in the world? And what about the Staff? After all, that requires more training than any other part of the Army.

EARL ROBERTS: If you are going to have a fortnight's training for the cavalry and for the staff, you will have no Army at all.

*LORD LUCAS: Then I do not think I was wrong in saying that the noble and gallant Field-Marshal's speech implied a sweeping condemnation of the whole of the Territorial Army. Because that Army cannot beat off a surprise attack at the outset of a war it is to be condemned. But that is not the function of any second line army. Mr. Haldane and his advisers have no delusion on this head. They have maintained all through that you were not going to get a Territorial Army that was fit to face the enemy at once on the outbreak of war. I think I am not overstating the position when I say that it is impossible for a man to combine a strenuous civil profession with the necessary amount of military training to enable him to go out straight from his home and face a highly-trained enemy. The Army Council realise the absolute truth of the statement of the Norfolk Committee, that if the purpose is to produce a force which can be relied upon to turn out at short notice and defeat an invader, then improvements in the Militia and Volunteer Forces will not be sufficient. This scheme amounts to improvements in the Militia and Volunteer Forces, and therefore, Mr. Haldane and his advisers do not anticipate that the Territorial Army is going to be able to turn out at once, without further training, to resist the best-trained troops that could be put against them. If you contend that a second line Army is going to be of no use you must, to be consistent, show that the Militia has never been of use in this country all through its history. I do not think anyone will go as far as that. The only possible solution of the position raised by the noble and gallant Field-Marshal seems to be this, that if you cannot defend your coasts from invasion during the early months of a war it is absolute madness to send the whole of the Regular Army out of the country. You must keep two or three divisions at home, and, if you do that, you will still have as big a force capable of being sent straight away as it took five months to send to South Africa. But that was not the solution given by the noble and gallant Field-Marshal. His solution was that you should give up the idea of raising Territorial Field Artillery and keep Regular Field Artillery in this country. According to his view, therefore, the idea of raising field artillery for the Territorial Army must be abandoned. That means that the Territorial Army can never be an Army in the true sense of the word. However long a war may last, however long the Territorial Force may remain embodied, it will never be able to defend this country without the help of Regulars, because it will have lost all semblance of being an Army.

EARL ROBERTS: If it is only a semblance it is a sham Army.

*LORD LUCAS: If that view is to prevail the County Associations may as well be disbanded at once, and the Volunteers be allowed to slip back into the slough of disorganisation from which we are raising them and abandon the idea of a second line Army to be gradually moulded and trained so as to be fit in the great crisis of war to defend this country and to fight side by side with the Regulars. Last year the noble Field-Marshal gave a qualified blessing to this scheme. Now, when a critical stage in its development has been reached, and every one was looking for a few words of encouragement from the noble Field-Marshal, he passes this heavy sentence on a yet unborn child because it cannot carry out functions which it was never intended to carry out. I can only regard that as likely to make the task of the County Associations heavier and more difficult than it is at the present time.

Lord WYNFORD: My Lords, as one who has served in the horse and field artillery for a period of sixteen years I ask your Lordships' indulgence while I say a few words on this matter as affecting field artillery. Notwithstanding the explanations which were given by the noble Earl the Under-Secretary last Thursday, and by the noble Lord who has just sat down, I think that this Return which has been the subject of debate shows a very unsatisfactory state of affairs as regards that branch of the service. According to this Return we have at the present moment only 9,800 rank and file Regular field artillerymen fit for service. Our expeditionary force will consist of sixty-six field artillery batteries, and their complement at war strength of rank and file, including brigade ammunition columns and first line reinforcements, is 18,600. Now suppose we had had to mobilise on 1st February this year, and suppose, too, that we had had sufficient special reservists to man divisional ammunition columns, we should have had to make up the expeditionary force with 8,800 rank and file Reservists—nearly half the force—and, in addition, denude the remaining thirty-three batteries.

How, my Lords, can we afford to deduct from our present number of efficient men 2,400, the number which the Government contemplate reducing? I think the margin is far too narrow already, when we consider that we have to allow further for reinforcements to India and for the wastage of war, and, in addition to this, that our Reserve will be decreasing annually. Are we to infer that these Special Reservists will be employed in the brigade ammunition columns as well as in the divisional ammunition columns. If so, I think it is dangerous, as it brings them one step nearer the firing line, and I am of opinion that these men will never be fit to take their place in the firing line. They may not be intended to do so, but they are bound to as casualties occur, and it must be remembered that in our latest experience of war we had no trained artillery opposing us and few casualties to replace compared to what we may expect in a campaign against trained gunners. The artillery of the Special Contingent will prove useful in the divisional ammunition columns, and I think the country should be grateful to Mr. Haldane for this provision; but to expect these men, with six months' or even a year's training, to take their place in the firing line is absurd.

I hope the noble and gallant Field-Marshal Lord Roberts will not think me presumptuous, bearing in mind the smallness of my experience compared to his, when I say that I entirely agree with him that partially trained artillery will only be a danger to their own side. I have no faith whatever in artillery which is not properly and fully trained. The noble Viscount Lord Midleton referred in his speech to a lecture given by a very able officer—Captain Vincent—at the United Service Institution in December last, and he quoted some remarks made by General Sir Ian Hamilton at the conclusion of that lecture. Sir Ian Hamilton disagreed with an opinion expressed by the lecturer, but—and this is a point I do not think the noble Viscount brought out—he concluded his remarks by saying that he gave his opinion merely as an infantry officer. A battery in the field is, or should be, the highest trained unit in our Army; it is a machine in which each man forms one of many essential component parts, and any little mistake on the part of one of those men may render the whole machine absolutely useless, and mean disaster to the force of which it forms a unit.

In the Memorandum presented to this House last August, entitled "The principles to be kept in view in training the Territorial Force and Special Contingent," it is directed that gun practice for the Artillery Special Contingent is to be carried out in four years out of every six. That is very false economy; but I pass that over because a more important point follows. The training of specialists is very casually laid down. These specialists consist of layers, signallers, rangetakers, observers, patrols, etc. They form a considerable portion of a battery —in fact, nearly 50 per cent. of the gunners in the firing line. Now, these specialists cannot possibly be trained in six months with a casual rubbing up every year for fifteen days. To be of any service at all these men require continual training. It is of no use saying that we are going to have four or five times as many men. Five men cannot combine their mental ability and training at will in one of themslves, they cannot all look through one telescope at one time or all wave one flag. My Lords, too many cooks spoil the broth, and it is quality we want rather than quantity. It is for this reason that I view with much concern the reduction of these 2,400 trained men whom we now have. We are told they are not reduced yet, and I hope the Government will see their way to retain these men, if only on the three years service system as suggested by the noble Viscount Lord Midleton. We should then have them continually going through the mill and passing to the Reserve, having learnt, in addition to their drill, those habits of discipline which are so essential to an efficient Army.

There is a point as regards the Special Contingent which I do not think has been touched on yet. These training brigades are already being reduced to mere skeletons, and I presume will be further reduced when there are five partially trained men to every one of those 2,400. May I ask whether the officers are going to be eventually reduced in the same proportions, and, if not, how are these Regular officers, with practically no men and no horses, to keep themselves up to that pitch of excellence which is expected of them? If they are to be reduced, is it possible that His Majesty's Government intend to replace each of them by five officers of the Special Contingent? I have the greatest admiration for those officers of the Special Reserve Artillery who attempt to become efficient, but to become an efficient artillery officer one must start young and devote one's whole service to it; and I do not see how it is possible for these officers, with the best will in the world, to reach that standard which will enable them to take their place in a battery on service. I notice, however, that the supply and training of these officers is still under consideration by a Committee dealing with this subject, and I shall look forward to a further Memorandum at a future date. I would not have addressed your Lordships but that I feel considerable misgiving about the policy of His Majesty's Government as regards the field artillery, and I am firmly convinced that a very large majority of artillery officers hold the same views as myself. I must apologise for going into a few technical details, but I have endeavoured to put the importance of this question before your Lordships to the best of my ability.

Lord RAGLAN: My Lords, I have listened with the greatest possible interest to the speeches that have been delivered from both sides of the House, and I venture to think the noble Lord who addressed us last from the Government Benches endeavoured to do what we on this side have tried to prevent—namely, to switch off the discussion from the Regular Army to a panegyric on a force which does not exist, and which, in my opinion, never will exist, at any rate in the numbers the Secretary of State imagines. The noble Viscount Lord Midleton drew attention to three matters of great importance: (1) The loss of numbers in the Regular Army; (2) the loss of quality; and (3) the very serious position in which the country is now placed by being deprived of all assurance that there is any military approbation behind these changes. A reduction of 30,000 men and 500 officers would be a serious question for any Army in the world, and it is particularly so in the case of a small Army like our own. And when on the top of the reduction in numbers there is a great falling off in quality, then the position becomes dangerous. The noble Earl the Under-Secretary, in endeavouring to answer my noble friend, said that this was entirely my noble friend's fault, and was due to the introduction of the three years system. I cannot agree with that, because a considerable time has elapsed since the three years system of enlistment came to an end, and there has been ample time to have recovered from that experiment.

When we examine the White Paper laid before your Lordships and to which the noble Viscount has drawn attention, we cannot fail to see that the numbers of the Regular Army have been allowed to fall to a very dangerous point; and I think it is most unfortunate that no attempt seems to have been made by the War Office to rectify this state of things, although they saw it happening. The noble Earl, replying to the criticism regarding the reductions in the artillery, said that no reduction had been made in horse and field artillery. He avoided all allusion to garrison artillery, in connection with which there has been a reduction of something like 5,000 men. The garrison artillery are physically and intellectually the picked soldiers of the British Army, and as long as you have these men behind the field artillery it was always possible to utilise them in filling up deficiencies. But this reserve will be lost to the field artillery in the future. I am credibly informed that the permanent staff of the Militia artillery is to be very largely reduced if not done away with altogether, and I wish to know if this reduction is to be over and above the present reduction or to be part of the 2,400 of which we have heard so much. The noble Earl repeated the misleading statement with regard to the forty-two batteries; over and over again it has been explained that the fact that those batteries had been but recently raised had prevented them from creating their reserve. Notwithstanding that, however, the noble Earl repeated the statement that such was the state of of the Reserve that no more than forty-two batteries could be raised.

Lord Lucas made some attempt to answer the very serious speech of the noble and gallant Earl on the cross benches. I venture to think that that speech was one of the most serious made in your Lordships' House for a considerable time, and I hope something will yet be forthcoming from His Majesty's Government to mitigate the effect of that speech and to reassure us a little more. Lord Lucas said that if the noble and gallant Earl did not think a fortnight's training sufficient for artillery, how was it possible to train cavalry and infantry in that period? I venture to think that that part of the noble Lord's speech was one of the strongest indictments of the Territorial Force as a whole. I will not labour the point of the Territorial artillery, for I do not think anything I could say would add to the effect of the very serious words which fell from the noble and gallant Field-Marshal. I have never yet come across any soldier who believes it possible to form batteries of artillery with the absolutely inadequate training proposed. Lord Lucas made the remarkable statement that no previous attempt had been made at the organisation of the British Army. My memory is not quite so short as that. I remember the attempt that was made by my noble friend below me to organise the Army in Army Corps, and the contempt which was poured upon his efforts by the then Opposition, now His Majesty's Government. Therefore the noble Lord is not correct in saying that the organisation of the Army had not been attempted before.

Then the noble Lord said it does not matter whether you disband battalions, because the important thing is to have divisions and brigades fully organised for war. Well, I would much rather have a scratch brigade composed of well-organised battalions than I would have a well-organised brigade composed entirely of scratch battalions. I cannot help thinking that that must be the inevitable effect of the new organisation as proposed by the Secretary of State for War. Lord Lucas also said that it was for this system of organisation and for this magnificent Territorial Army that we had paid the price of these reductions. We have paid the price, but we have not got the article for which we have paid; and I have extreme doubt whether we shall ever get that article. The noble Earl the Under-Secretary, in the course of his remarks, made some reference to the duty of the military members of the Army Council. I am always sorry that in these debates we do not have the advantage of the presence on the cross benches of the noble Viscount who was at the head of the celebrated triumvirate to which reference has been made in the course of this debate; because it is possible for two people to read the same passages and arrive at exactly opposite conclusions as to what they were intended to convey. I am bound to say that I agree with the noble Earl that if the military members are not satisfied with the proposals of the Secretary of State, then it is their duty to show their dissatisfaction by resignation. That is all very well, but they do not resign. The Army Council appear to have blessed with equal unanimity the scheme of Mr. Arnold - Forster and the scheme of the present Secretary of State. They are complete changes in half a dozen different ways, the present scheme constituting reversals of all previous military advice given to the Secretary of State. After the statement of the Under-Secretary, I suppose we must assume that these officers approve of these kaleidoscopic changes, for they do not resign.

In my opinion it is the business of the Inspector-General to act as the auditor of the nation in regard to our land forces, and the doctrine laid down by the noble Earl the Under-Secretary that the Reports of the Inspector-General were for the private information of the Army Council is not my idea of the duties of an auditor. The auditor of a company is appointed by the shareholders, and it is his business to certify to the accuracy of the accounts. What would be said of a company who contended that the auditor was the servant of, and worked under, the directors, and that his report on the state of the company was entirely for the private ear of the directors? That seems to me to be the War Office idea of an auditor. All I can say is that it is not mine. We have paid the price; there have been destroyed 30,000 men of the Regular Army, and 90,000 of the Militia; what are we going to get for it? We have got nominally a saving of £1,000,000. Will any one on the Treasury Bench assure me that that £1,000,000 has not been obtained by starving the stores? Are the mobilisation stores in a complete state? Is there any surplus ammunition? We have paid the price; are we ever going to get the article?

LORD LOVAT: My Lords, I would like to occupy a few moments of your Lordships' time to call attention to one or two points on which we differ from the Secretary of State for War. It has been inferred from the other side of the House that we have changed our opinion on the subject of the Territorial Army, and that what we backed at one period we now condemn. I think the boot is on the other foot, and that some of the promises in regard to training and organisation which were held out when the Territorial Army was being thought of have not materialised. On the subject of training I do not think it is necessary to say anything as regards the artillery, because that point has been admirably dealt with by my noble friend on my right.

As regards the Yeomanry, we were told that enormous strides were to be made in the matter of training, but I maintain that the Yeomanry now will not be as well trained as under the old state of things. As to mobilisation, one of the reasons why we were all anxious to see the scheme come into operation was that we felt that the question of mobilisation was going to be definitely tackled. Many noble Lords twitted the late Government with the fact that, although a mobilisation scheme was promised every year, no scheme arrived. Not only have we not got a mobilisation scheme now, but I do not think we have any chance of ever getting one. May I give your Lordships a statement of what the mobilisation arrangements are? The other day a document was received by the County Associations to the effect that the Army Council consider it most important that the Territorial Force should not, in the event of a general or partial mobilisation, start their horse purchasing operations until the units of the expeditionary force have been completed with the horses required. That means that the mobilisation of the Territorial Army cannot begin until the whole of the horses of the expeditionary force are purchased. It is no good mobilising an Army without horses, and if you have to wait until the whole of the 59,000 horses required for the expeditionary force have been procured, how can you say that any advance in regard to mobilisation has been made? Yet, as I have said, one of the reasons why many persons have been anxious to see the new scheme put into operation was precisely their belief that the mobilisation question was to be definitely tackled.

We were told that the deficiency of from 8,000 to 11,000 officers was going to be dealt with, and £50,000 was put into last year's Estimates in connection with the matter. I believe, however, that not a farthing of that money has been spent on officers, apart from the expenses of the Commissioners who sat to elaborate a scheme. Then I understand that the whole of the benefit of the scheme which was formulated was cut out by reducing the pay the officers were to get. I speak as one who is a believer in the Teritorial Scheme if it is given a chance. If it is going to be starved for money I do not believe in it. I fear that at the present moment the Secretary of State for War is looking, not to those who are backing up his scheme and trying to carry it through—and none are more prominent in this direction than Members of your Lordships' House—but to the extreme Left of his own Party. But is he getting much help there? Are the trade unions coming forward to give him the men? I doubt it. If Mr. Haldane wishes to carry out his organisation and get his men he would surely do better to look to those who have helped him.

There is another point on which we have a difference with the Secretary of State. I refer to the promise which was given that nothing should be taken away until some definite substitute could be put in its place. I agree with the noble Lord opposite as regards the deplorable state in point of numbers of the British Army at the present time. There is some limit to the power of men serving with the colours to absorb Reservists and keep up the efficiency of the unit as a whole, and the only class who could give trustworthy information on this matter—the captain or subaltern of a regiment—was not represented by the witnesses called before the Elgin Commission. If inquiries were made among that class it would probably be found that the opinion is that when a limit of 50 per cent. is passed the decrease of efficiency goes down at a rate which is geometrical rather than arithmetical. Then, as regards the question of the numbers in a battalion and the efficiency of each unit at war strength, what is important is not only their value *per se*, but as compared to, say, the most efficient unit of the German Army. After all, the point of consideration in regard to a battalion at war strength is that it has to fight somebody, and therefore, it is reasonable to ask how those men could compete with battalions they may have to face.

In the German Army all the men join after their twentieth year—from twenty to twenty-three years of age. The battalions on a peace basis are from 590 to 630, and in one case, that of the rifles, from 630 to 683. Then they have men who have done their term with the colours, and go on and serve as sort of minor non-commissioned officers, and they add to the efficiency of the corps. Then they have their Reservists; they are not brought out in driblets to be trained, but 345,000 are brought out in the year. These matters are thoroughly gone into in Germany and not left to chance. Moreover, they have added enormously to their number of subalterns and have excellent classes for training them. If one of our attenuated battalions was asked to compete against a German battalion, can you expect them to meet on anything like equal terms? I do not wish to touch on the subject of the artillery, but there is one question I should like to ask regarding the actual conditions under which the Regular Artillery is trained. The artillery officers tell me they have only sixty horses per battery. Yet our artillery is the most essential part of our forces. I understand from a statement made in another place by Sir Charles Dilke, who is always well informed on

Army affairs, that our horses have gone down by some 800 as compared with last year, and from what one hears it is clear that 1,500 artillery horses are long passed casting age.

There is one other point to which I should like to refer. The Secretary of State for War, speaking in another place, said that in certain circumstances we might require two divisions for service at home in case of invasion. That would at once lower the expeditionary force, but the statement shows that we are at last approaching some point of sanity on the subject of the possibility of invasion. We have arrived at a point when, apparently, the possibility of invasion is to be believed in. Then we have been told that we cannot expect the Territorial Force to be ready at once to act. I believe, however, that the infantry and cavalry could give a very good account of themselves. After all, the question is whether the force will be sufficient, with its small battalions and artillery not trained, to cope with the possibility of an invasion. I venture to think that His Majesty's Government are incurring a grave danger by taking a single man off the Regular Army, or reducing a single unit, whether Territorial or Regular.

Lord HARRIS: My Lords, I hope that before this debate closes, or at some early date, we may get some more satisfactory reply from the Government to the criticisms of the noble and gallant Earl on the cross benches, with regard to the use of the Territorial Artillery. I am sure we must all sympathise with the noble Lord on the back benches opposite, Lord Lucas. The noble Lord complained of the change as regards the treatment of this beloved child of the present Secretary of State for War, which, he said, started on its career with so many congratulations last year, but now suddenly, at a most critical period of its existence, found itself severely criticised. The noble Lord's evident enthusiasm for the scheme arouses one's sympathy; but I hope he will not think me uncomplimentary if I say that his answer to the criticisms of the noble and gallant Field-Marshall was a feeble one.

The noble Lord fell back upon the Report of the Norfolk Commission, who stated that our Auxiliary forces were not fit to be put in the field against first-class troops. He fell back upon that as an excuse for not improving the Auxiliary Army at all. If the noble Lord thinks that, as regards the training of troops and their use in the field, any orders that have been issued are going to change the character of the Auxiliary Army, I can assure him he is very much mistaken. There is not a single order that has been issued that is going to alter one iota the character or utility, as far as units go, of the present Auxiliary Army. In fact, in one small point their efficiency is likely to be reduced. The Secretary of State is being criticised by his own Party for being extravagant in regard to the Territorial Army. Well, he has effected one or two small economies. He has cut down the Yeomanry by a day, and though a field officer is entitled to forage for three or four horses he will only get railway carriage for one, so that he will be discouraged from bringing more than one horse.

I protest against the idea that, at any rate, two branches of the Territorial Army are of no use in case of sudden attack. That may have been said by the Norfolk Commission, but I do not agree with it. I maintain that a Yeomanry regiment, composed of men who can ride and shoot and look after horses in camp, would be of use even in a sudden emergency. What chance under the present scheme has the War Office of horsing either the Territorial Artillery or the Yeomanry in case of sudden engagement? I protest against the noble Lord's assertion that the Territorial Army is not meant for the purpose of resisting sudden invasion. Why, the whole object of raising the Yeomanry and the Volunteers was to resist sudden invasion, and the conditions of service show that that was the intention. To suggest now that this Auxiliary Army has never been of any use for the defence of the country and that the Territorial Army is going to be of use, is an assumption in favour of the scheme of the War Office which I most decidedly refuse to accept.

I remember asking Lord Wolseley what he would do in the event of a sudden raid on the shores of England, and he replied—

"I would pour Volunteers on them."

That would be the use of these bodies all round the coast. They could be on the spot quicker than Regular troops in a great many cases. I ask what are the chances at the present moment of the War Office being able to horse either the Territorial batteries or the Yeomanry? The instructions we have received, one of which was referred to by my noble friend Lord Lovat, show that we are to do nothing. I have never been a believer in the County Associations. The War Office could have done everything by Royal Warrant; they had no occasion to set up any of these petty War Offices. I hold His Majesty's Commission, and it is my business to carry out orders and try to make a success of this scheme. One order issued is that we are to do nothing with regard to horses until the Army is satisfied. That is discouraging, and I hope we may receive some instructions from the War Office which would enable us to set about a practical scheme of registration for the mounted branches of the Territorial Army. I believe it would be perfectly feasible without interfering with what the Regular Army may want. I believe it would be feasible for the Association to set on foot within its own area a scheme which would not be expensive, but would enable officers commanding mounted units to lay their hands upon the horses that are wanted in so short a space of time that their units could be mobilised and put into the field at least two days quicker than under the present mobilisation orders of the War Office.

*The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the debate which has been continued to-night from last week must, I think, be regarded by most of your Lordships, and I think it will be so regarded by the public outside, as distinctly discouraging. I share the hope expressed by my noble friend who has just sat down that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who has some expert knowledge of Army matters, will be able to give us information more satisfactory than that which we have up to the present moment been able to elicit from the representatives of His Majesty's Government.

Lord Harris.

I am not going to travel again in detail over the points which have been so well dealt with by my noble friends behind me. Some of their comments have not been traversed, and are not likely to be traversed. There is, in the first place, the question of the reduction of the strength of the Regular Army. It is admitted that the Army has been weakened by something like 36,000 men, including 500 officers and some 2,000 or 3,000 non-commissioned officers, and that nine or ten valuable units disappear from the Army List. The noble Lord who spoke from the second bench opposite in support of the War Office said that these reductions must be considered with reference to the whole scheme of Army reform, and we are quite ready to consider them with reference to the whole scheme; our object is to look about and see in what part of the scheme we are to find compensation for this undoubted weakening of the fighting strength of the Army.

Then there is the reduction of the establishments of the home battalions from 800 to 720 men. The noble Lord who spoke for the Government told us that we ought not to fix our attention too much on single units, that the value of a single unit is a very indefinite thing, and that the reduction of the unit beyond a certain number of men does not after all matter very much. I recall a statement made by the Under-Secretary the other evening when he gave us much valuable information as to the duties and functions of the home battalions, of which he spoke with thorough knowledge. These home battalions have to supply drafts to the battalions abroad, they have to train men, and have on occasion to appear in the *rôle* of fighting units when duly reinforced by their proper quota of Army Reservists. These are very heavy duties, and I have always believed that if you impose them on a battalion of insufficient strength, you run a fair chance of breaking the heart of the battalion. We were, at any rate, firmly convinced that an increase in the strength of these battalions was essential, and I very much regret that His Majesty's Government propose to undo what we did.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I am sorry to interrupt the noble Marquess, but I stated distinctly, in the course of my speech, that upon this question the Government were quite prepared for reconsideration, and, if necessary, for increase of the establishment when recruiting became normal again.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I was about to refer to that. I understand from the noble Earl that the Government are not wholly committed to this reduction, and that when the prospects of recruiting become better, the War Office, with an open mind, will be prepared to consider a return to the old strength. I am glad to have elicited that statement from my noble friend. There is another matter, upon which I do not wish to dwell too much, and that is the effect of these reductions on the strength of the Army Reserve. The Commission presided over by the noble Earl opposite was, if I remember right, emphatic as to the need of a strong Reserve and as to the value of these Army Reservists when they took their place in the battalions which we sent out to South Africa. I therefore greatly regret any changes which will tend in the direction of reducing the strength of that Reserve. It is quite true that at the present moment the Reserve is very strong, but we have to look ahead to the time when the three years men brought in by my noble friend behind me will terminate their period of service and when the strength of the Reserves must drop suddenly and to a very marked extent. All the changes the Secretary of State for War is introducing tend, and must tend, to reduce the Reserves. The matter is capable of mathematical demonstration; you cannot have weaker units and fewer units with a longer term of colour service without automatically weakening the Reserve-producing power of those units.

We are told to look for compensation to the new Special Reserve which His Majesty's Government will call into existence, but the statements to which I have listened with regard to the Special Reserve, I must say, fill me with considerable misgiving. In point of numbers, they will be fewer than the old Militia, and what will they be in point of quality? Their functions will be to feed the Line, for which they will require some 10,000 men per annum; they will have to make good the wastage of the Reserve, which will require about 11,000 men annually; and, in addition to these functions, they are expected to maintain a somewhat precarious existence as a unit of a kind.

And what kind of a unit will they be, recruited as they are to be recruited? The best men will pass out, and there will remain in the battalion a residuum of the least fit of the lads who enter. Besides this, you are going, I understand, to get rid of all the men over thirty, a change which will still further add to the youth of these so-called battalions. When I am told to look for compensation to the Special Reserve, I ask myself what sort of recruits will the Special Reserve pour into the fighting line in the place of the seven years men, thoroughly trained, seasoned and disciplined, to whom we were accustomed in the past? The Secretary of State for War has told the public that the fighting first line of the Army is now organised as it has never been organised before, and that when, in time of need, a great commander steps forward he will find an instrument to his hand at least scientifically more perfect than it has ever been before. Well, I do not know what may be the scientific perfection of the instrument, but when I consider its practical value I fail to see how there is a great improvement on the instrument we have known in the past.

I wish in particular to say a few words on the subject of the artillery. When the Government of the late Lord Salisbury were in power the question of the artillery was very carefully considered by His Majesty's then advisers. Before the South African War we had added fifteen batteries, and by the time we went out of office we, had added in round figures, about sixty. I know I shall be told that these batteries thus suddenly called into existence were without their full complement of Reserves and that consequently it was impossible to mobilise them. But no one ever pretended that you could call a battery of artillery with the necessary Reserves into existence by a mere stroke of the pen, any more than His Majesty's Government can call a new Territorial Army and a Special Reserve into existence by merely preparing a paper scheme for the purpose.

I was rather amused when the Under-Secretary revealed to us as a new discovery that the proper complement of guns was five to every 1,000 men. The discovery is a very old one. I have in my possession a copy of a Minute which I prepared for Lord Salisbury's Government, in which I applied—advised by Lord Wolseley who was then Commander-in-Chief—for the increase of artillery to which I just now referred, upon the ground that it was necessary, in order to give us the very proportion of five guns per 1,000 men which apparently now finds favour with the military advisers of the Crown. We instituted this important increase of artillery, and I cannot help regarding it as most unfortunate that a large proportion of the batteries then added to the artillery are now to be reduced to mere training batteries with only two guns apiece. I understand there are to be something like forty men per battery, and the gaps are to be filled up by men trained on a Militia basis, who must naturally be unfit to take the place of skilled men in the field.

I will not refer to the matter further, for it has been thoroughly dealt with by Lord Wynford, who has addressed us this evening for the first time with a knowledge of the subject derived from the fact that he had for some time the honour of holding a Commission in the Royal Artillery; but I desire to say a few words in regard to the artillery of the Territorial Army. I understand that the same proportion of five guns per 1,000 men is to obtain in the Territorial Army, and that 196 batteries of artillery are to be created. I can only describe this as a most tremendous plunge. Are we sure that we can get the men? Are we going to get officers? Are we sure of getting horses? Are there reasonable grounds for believing that ranges will be available? And when you have got all these things, are there sufficient reasons for believing that under the conditions that will prevail you will attain that degree of efficiency without which artillery is not only useless, but much worse than useless? The speech of the noble and gallant Field-Marshal holds the field. Lord Lucas treated my noble and gallant friend not quite fairly, because he represented him as having denounced the whole Territorial Force, lock, stock, and barrel. But, if I remember aright, my noble friend went out of his way to express his obligation to Mr. Haldane for having created the Territorial Force, and it was only with regard to the artillery of that force that he spoke strongly. My noble friend voiced the general uneasiness of the public in regard to this question, and he voiced, not only that, but I believe the unanimous opinion of every officer who has ever made public his view with regard to the artillery question, and of every soldier of eminence, from Napoleon I. down to the present Army Council.

What was the noble and gallant Earl's description of the Territorial Artillery? He said that, even if we could get them and mobilise them in time, they would be useless against professional troops. Surely we must make our calculations on the assumption that it is professional troops that they will be called upon to meet. But I may be told that after all this Territorial Artillery is the best that we can get and that we must be grateful for it, and that they will make up in point of number for what they lack in point of quality. I am afraid that that statement cannot be reconciled with the statement of the noble and gallant Field-Marshal; for he told us that not only would these insufficiently trained artillerists be useless, but that they would be a source of positive danger to those with whom they serve. And he went so far as to say that the penalty they would pay in action for their want of sufficient training and discipline would be the penalty of annihilation. That is a serious statement coming from so high an authority, and we have a right to ask whether that statement is seriously challenged, and, if so, on what authority it is challenged. All that I and my friends, who have also served at the War Office, can say on that point is that our military advisers gave us a clear and unambiguous opinion on the value of this partially trained artillery.

Unless the noble Earl's statement can be challenged, and unless the impression which that statement created can be removed, then I venture to say that His Majesty's Government can scarcely do otherwise than reconsider their whole position with regard to this question of the Territorial Artillery. I say that they should do so not only because it is due to the public generally, but because they are bound to do it in fairness to the County Associations which they have called into existence all over the country. You have given these County Associations a very hard task, but the hardest nut you have given them to crack is this formation of batteries of artillery. If they are to approach that task without a reasonable prospect of success, I say you are imposing on them a burden which you ought not to ask them to bear. I can scarcely resist repeating a conversation which I had the other day with a friend of mine to whom it was suggested that he might aid a County Association, with which I am connected, in raising artillery. He said—

> "I will do anything that the Association asks me to do; but if you ask me to raise artillery, I cannot help asking myself what kind of artillery I am likely to be able to raise in this part of England, and whether I may not produce something which is of no value."

That feeling prevails in many parts of the country.

The Secretary of State for War the other day announced that it was impossible to put heart into the Territorial Forces unless we showed that we relied on them for all arms of the Service. I think that is a statement that requires careful examination. I endeavour to project my mind into the future and to imagine a body of Territorial troops engaged with the enemy, and I ask myself whether it would put more heart into them to know that they were supported by, let us say, a brigade of Regular Artillery, or, let us say, by two brigades of the home-made article. I will ask a question on this point. Are noble Lords opposite able to point to any foreign country in which an experiment anything like this is being tried? I think I can tell them of one, if not of two cases, which scarcely fit in with their theory. I am told on what I believe to be good authority that in Austria it has been thought desirable lately, to attach Regular Artillery to the Territorial troops, and I am told that in Switzerland the artillery has lately been taken away from the Cantons and placed under the Federal Government for the reason that the Cantonal Artillery was thought to be not sufficiently trained or qualified.

I am not going to suggest to His Majesty's Government that they should drop their scheme. But what I do suggest, and earnestly beg that they will take into consideration, is that before they commit themselves beyond recall to this colossal project of raising 196 batteries of Territorial Artillery, they will try the experiment in a few carefully selected districts. If it succeeds, by all means let them push the experiment further, and no one will be better pleased than the noble and gallant Field-Marshal if he finds that his anticipations are mistaken.

There is only one other point on which I need say anything more. My noble friend has moved for Papers. The Under-Secretary gave a two-fold answer. He said, in the first place, that he would not produce the Papers, and, in the second place, that there were no Papers to produce. He said that there were no decisions, no records, and no minutes.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I said that the matter was discussed at a meeting of the Army Council, but that there were no minutes.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: If there is no official document which can be given to the House, is it impossible for the noble Earl to find some means at any rate of informing the public how it is that this tremendous revolution in military opinion has been produced? If there are grounds for such a complete departure from the old traditions, let the public know them, and, above all, let the County Associations know what the grounds are.

As for the Report of the Inspector-General, of course if that is a privileged document we shall not press for its production. But there, again, I must say, that it seems to me a little hard that nothing should be given to Parliament and the public. I ask you to remember that the appointment of an Inspector-General, who was to be regarded as the Auditor-General of the public in regard to military questions, took place concurrently with the abolition of the appointment of Commander-in-Chief. In the distribution of duties that prevailed before that abolition, the Commander-in-Chief was entrusted with the general command and inspection of the Forces. The Commander-in-Chief was usually a Member of this House. He frequently took part in our discussions, and it was always possible for him to reassure the public, or perhaps sometimes to alarm the public, if he thought it necessary. But the Inspector-General is a much more remote and impalpable person, and if we are to get nothing from him, I do think that those who take an interest in the efficiency of the Army have some cause to complain. At any rate, I trust that some means will be found to give to Parliament and the public a general idea at all events of the grounds on which this new departure in the artillery has been decided on.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): My Lords, I shall at this hour of the evening say what I have to say in as few words as possible; and partly for that reason, and partly because I do not feel that I am competent to answer Questions of detail, I am afraid I cannot attempt to reply to some of the many questions which have been put by noble Lords on the other side of the House. But I wish to reply definitely and distinctly to one of them—to the question of stores for the Territorial Army. I have to say that there has been no reduction in the stores of the Regular Army, and the guns and ammunition for the Territorial Force are surplus to the requirements of the Regulars. I was surprised to hear what Lord Harris said on the subject of the provision of horses, because I myself, as president of a County Association, have already been consulting with the chairman as to the provision of horses in my county. I have no doubt the noble Lord is correct with regard to the Papers issued, but I think it stands to reason that the County Associations would be well advised as soon as possible to exert themselves in regard to the provision of horses.

LORD HARRIS: We have been distinctly told we are not to do anything with regard to horses until the Army is satisfied.

*THE EARL OF ELGIN: I do not mean that we should interfere with the Army. The noble Marquess appealed to me on the ground of my having some acquaintance with military affairs to say whether the Reservists who were called into the ranks in the South African war were fit for the purpose to which they were put. I certainly can endorse the statement that this was the opinion of the Commission. As far as the numbers of the Reservists were concerned, they were then supplied under the system of enlistment now again in force, and the Special Reserves would, at any rate, have as much training as, if not more than the Militia. In the opinion of those who are qualified to judge, we ought to have in the Special Reserve men as capable of serving with the Line as the Militia Reserve formerly was. The noble Lord who opened this debate was not quite fair to the Secretary of State. He said that the Secretary for War was drawing away the public mind from the Regular Army, his references to which were an oasis in the desert of references to the Territorial Army.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF ELGIN: But the noble Viscount has forgotten how long it is since he has been out of office, because if my right hon. friend is able now to argue the case of the Territorial Army with energy it is because in 1906 he dealt first with the Regulars. I think also that the noble Lord is not quite fair in asking for the views of the expert advisers of the Government. After all, these officers are responsible to the Government. Their advice is freely given to the Secretary of State, but if it was made public that responsibility would become unbearable. The phrase "Auditor-General" was merely a phrase which has been taken to indicate the general position which the Inspector-General should occupy, and not to lay upon him in any sense the special duties which the auditor of a company discharges. But if the noble Lord wants to know how this matter has been dealt with in the past, I would remind him that, in reply to a question in the House of Commons on 15th March, 1905, as to whether he had received the Report of the Inspector-General of the forces for 1904, and whether it was intended to lay it before Parliament, Mr. Arnold-Forster said that the Report had been received by the Army Council, but that it was not intended to make it public, that the essence of a Report of this kind was that it should not be made public. It seems to me that the Secretary of State must necessarily act on the advice he receives from his confidential officers, and that it is impossible to hold that they should be questioned in any way.

A good deal turns on the question, What is expert evidence? Noble Lords know very well from the practice in private Bill Committees how, when expert evidence is produced on one side, it is almost certain to be contradicted by expert evidence on the other side. Military experts are really in the same position. In this connection I can quote the noble and gallant Lord on the cross benches (Lord Roberts). I had once the honour of examining the noble and gallant Lord as an expert, and of putting a question to him which was so essentially for military expert advice that we only consulted three field-marshals. The noble and gallant Lord and another field-marshal gave opinions which were diametrically opposed to each other, and when the third field-marshal was asked for his opinion he declined to give any opinion at all, on the ground that the two former opinions showed that strategy was not an exact science. I never undervalue any opinion which is given by the noble and gallant Lord on a question like this now under discussion. If I did I should stand alone, not only in your Lordships' House, but in the country; and I accept what the noble and gallant Lord stated, that his one desire was to use his experience for the benefit of his country.

Not only as a member of the Government, but as president of a County Association which has been considering what, if any, artillery is to be introduced, I have been personally interested in this question. If it was so clear as it seems to be now to many noble Lords, why was not the question raised during the debates of last year? The main point of the noble Lord's criticism is an expression of his belief that the men would be insufficiently trained. In proof of that contention reliance is placed on the period of training found in the regulations to be observed in ordinary circumstances. Before, however, I accept this proof I would ask whether or not it is a reasonable hypothesis in the case of invasion? I admit that it is not impossible to argue on these lines, but I also hold that it may be represented as going beyond the bounds of reasonable calculations. What does it mean? It means the concurrence of three exordinary events. There must be at one and the same time the despatch of an expeditionary force of 150,000 men; secondly, a disaster to the Fleet which must be sufficiently serious to leave it *hors de combat*; and, thirdly, there must be an invasion. There is no precedent in the history of this country for a concurrence of these three events.

As far as I know there is only one precedent, viz., that of the South African war to illustrate the first contingency of the despatch of so large a force as 150,000 men. But that is subject to qualification. Lord Lovat suggested that it might turn out to be possible to use only four divisions and to leave two divisions at home. That may be so, but I am considering the case put forward in the debate, and assuming that the whole of the expeditionary force of 150,000 men is to be used. But in this matter events must follow in a sequence. There could be no expeditionary force despatched if the Fleet was disabled before that step was taken. If the Fleet was disabled first, the force would remain at home and become a garrison. If there was no disaster to the Fleet, are we to anticipate a serious invasion? The noble Lord said that we must always expect to have an invasion.

Without using the word "raid," may I not put it in this way? Supposing there was an invasion and a foreign force was landed: if the Fleet still held the seas, how would that force be able to get supplies and reinforcements? But, suppose that all went against us, and that the disasters of which I have spoken followed each other in their order. In the first place, the first step to be taken is the despatch of the expeditionary force. How long would it take to despatch a force of 150,000 men across the sea? I think I could ask the noble Marquess to give an opinion on that point with great confidence. In the South African war the pressure to send out troops was enormous. The first troops left this country on 1st August, 1899, and it was not until 31st July, 1900, that 150,000 men were in South Africa. What is to happen during this year? During this year the future garrison of the country, according to the scheme of the Government, will be embodied and trained. Before the last man sailed, therefore, and before any serious disaster happened to the Fleet, there would be in this country a force trained for several months. The force would not only be ready, but would be posted in the position, it was called upon to occupy. No doubt I may be told all this is unproved. How can it be otherwise? But, if anyone accuses the Government of want of preparation, surely it is at least a reply to some extent to say that we have done our best to form a scheme for meeting the emergency, and that we believe, on the strength of our advisers, that it will work.

I should like to say one word to noble Lords opposite. I know that many of them speak and feel with great affection of and belief in the Militia Force in which they have served and which they know so well. I entirely appreciate and sympathise with that position. But may I put it in this way? Parliament has deliberately determined otherwise. Your Lordships' House, joining with the other House of Parliament, has decreed that there should be a new order of things, and His Majesty has enjoined upon us, who represent him in the counties, that we should undertake the duty of organising the new force. Is the course taken by some noble Lords calculated to assist us in that duty? It appears to me that some of the observations, some of the bitterness, which I find in some of the speeches may rather create obstacles and deter men from entering the force. And if I wanted a good illustration of my meaning, I could not have wished anything better than what was said by Lord Dartmouth at the beginning of the debate, when he showed that already he, as Lord Lieutenant of his county, has encountered difficulty, owing to that very cause.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I should not have troubled your Lordships again, but there were one or two statements made by the Colonial Secretary which I can hardly allow to pass unchallenged. The whole course of this debate, so far as it has been conducted by the Government, has been to some extent disappointing to us on this side of the House. Even the noble Earl who has just sat down directed his remarks, not so much to justifying the heavy reductions which have been made in our effective forces, as to endeavouring to show your Lordships and the country that there was no cause for alarm, because some further period of training would be possible for the less effective forces. We have entirely failed in this debate to obtain from the Government any assurance that they will take steps of any sort to improve the condition of the infantry. We welcome from the noble Earl the statement that they have not said the last word; but they speak as if there were only one method of enlistment—the seven years method, and that there were no other men to be got under any circumstances. I hope they will think better of that.

With regard to the artillery, I believe I am expressing the opinion, not only of every noble Lord on this side of the House but of every man who has read this debate, when I say that profound uneasiness will be the result of it. The noble Earl said that I had not been fair to the Secretary of State for War in asking for the opinions of the expert advisers. The last thing in the world I should wish to do would be to be unfair, or even unreasonable, in regard to my inquiries; and if, in asking for the opinion of the expert advisers, I have done anything unfair, I can only say it is a discipline to which I have myself been subjected night after night at the hands of the noble Earl's colleagues in the House of Commons. I have been made specifically to say whether Lord Wolseley was in favour of such and such a course, whether Sir Redvers Buller had given his authority to it, and whether in proposing either an increase, or, in some cases a decrease, we could cite military opinion in favour of our proposal. This debate terminates without any military opinion whatever having been set against the opinion of the noble and gallant Field-Marshal, and the opinion I cited from Lord Wolseley. The noble Earl the Under-Secretary told us, with regard to a particular officer on the Army Council, that he accepted full responsibility; but the noble Earl guarded himself from saying that the officer approved of these reductions.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: As a matter of fact he took full and complete responsibility for the step that was taken. Sir. W. Nicholson joined the Army Council on 18th December, immediately after the Government was formed, and therefore he understood the whole of the change and everything that led up to it.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: I really do not wish to push this particular point any further, but it is one thing for a man to say that in view of the whole position placed before him, which includes an amount of money which the Government are going to give—it is one thing to say that in those circumstances we must dispense with this, that, and the other, and it is another thing to express the opinion that the country is safe if that is done. The noble Earl says an officer ought to resign if he does not agree, but we have before us something which is impalpable, a body which sits without minutes and without recorded decisions. I think the opinions of the military advisers will be found to vary very considerably when they are tested from a different standpoint. I only wish to refer to two other points. Lord Lucas did a considerable injustice to the efforts which were made in the War Office under the noble and gallant Field-Marshal when he said there was now an organisation which there had never been before, and that, thanks to that organisation of the Regular troops, it was no longer so material if some of them were reduced. So far as I know, there is absolutely nothing with regard to the expeditionary force which has been changed or improved since the organisation which had the sanction of Lord Roberts.

LORD LUCAS: My point was, first, that there had been an enormous improvement in regard to the organisation of the expeditionary force, so that the units that would train together in peace would go out together in war. That was, I said, a great improvement as compared with what happened before. Secondly, I said that nothing had been done by the Conservative Government ever since the war to make any provision for that training machinery which they had to set up very inadequately and in a hurry after war had broken out.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: I quite see what the noble Lord means, but it does not meet my point. The noble Lord told us that there was no halfway house, and that you must either trust the Territorial Force or it is no use at all. After our expeditionary force had gone we left behind a sufficient body both of infantry and artillery, to form a stiffening of the Territorial Force as it then existed. I say that that makes the whole difference. You will have no battery of Regulars left which you can mobilise in case of invasion. The noble Lord spoke as if we should never send the whole of our expeditionary force abroad if there were any apprehension of invasion. The Secretary of State the other day pointed out that circumstances might arise in which it would be very difficult for the Fleet to defend this country, and he added that in that event we should have to rely on our Territorial Force for defence against invasion. I will not at this late hour enter into that point, but I submit that to take the experience of the South African War as in any way a criterion of the pace at which we should send troops abroad, as was done by the noble

Earl the Colonial Secretary, is entirely misleading. We did not set out to send more than 30,000 or 40,000 men. We did not begin to do that until December, and the press came later. There are men in this country and on this side of your Lordships' House, who believe that if there were to be a raid on a large scale, we should not have six months, not six weeks, perhaps not even six days, in which to mobilise, and I think that the proposal to denude this country of all the Regular troops on whom we can depend, especially in the case of artillery, is one on which we should be granted further explanation. One satisfactory feature of the debate is that the opinions given will make it impossible for the Government to continue their reduction of the artillery. As the Government have stated that the production of such Papers as I have moved for would not be in the public interest, I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

House adjourned at Eight o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 16*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the Borough of Camberwell (Peckham Division), in the room of Charles Goddard Clarke, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] [(STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—Herne Bay Pier Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make further provision with respect to the discharge of compensation waters from the water undertaking of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the County Borough of Huddersfield, [Huddersfield Water Bill [Lords].]

HUDDERSFIELD WATER BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, against; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Ledbury, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Petition from Pembroke, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petition from Lee, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour; From Dovaston; Ruyton Eleven Towns; and Whittington; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Aintree, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CHARITY COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Fifty-fifth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales; [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Copy presented, of Supplement to the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for the year 1906. Return of Persons employed in 1904 in Non-Textile Factories and of Summary of Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health for 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF ESSEX).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Essex, altering certain Polling Districts in the Mid or Chelmsford Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Sowerby Bridge Urban District [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Emigration Statistics of Ireland for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Copy presented, of the Enactments proposed to be Amended or Repealed in the Schedules to the Bill [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SPRING ASSIZES ACT, 1879.

Copies presented, of Two Orders in Council of 29th February, 1908, constituting Spring Assize Counties Nos. 2 and 3 for the purpose of the ensuing Spring Assizes [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894.

Copies presented, of Two Orders in Council, dated 29th February, 1908: (1) applying the provisions of Section 238 of the Act to Deserters from Roumanian vessels; and (2) revoking the Order of the 2nd November, 1907, relating to the same subject [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Copy presented, of Orders in Council of 29th February, 1908, approving Memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for sanction to: (1) the continuance of payment of Command Money heretofore paid to the Captains of the Gunnery Schools at Sheerness and

Devonport, and allowances to Gunners at those Schools on their amalgamation with the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham and Devonport; (2) improvements in the Pay and Position of Commissioned Warrant Officers and Warrant Officers, and in the Pensions of Chief and Head Schoolmasters in His Majesty's Navy; (3) the payment of Prize Money for proficiency in Torpedo practice; and (4) certain modifications in the Rules respecting Allowances for Gunnery and Torpedo, and the application to men in the Service of the Regulations abolishing Re-engaged Pay [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION.

Copy presented, of Report on the Emigrants' Information Office for the year ended 31st December, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Agricultural Statistics, 1907, Vol. XLII., Part II., Return of Produce of Crops in Great Britain, with Summaries for the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SHERIFF COURTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1907.

Copy presented, of Act of Sederunt regulating the Fees payable in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland, and prescribing the Form of Books of Account to be kept by Sheriff Clerks [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 15th March, 1908, granting to James Ranyard Lee, First-Class Attendant, British Museum, a retiring Allowance under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Local Loans Fund.—Accounts of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in respect of the Capital and Income of the Local Loans Fund for the year ended 31st March, 1907, with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 48.]

ISLAND OF VATERSAY.

Return ordered, "of the Correspondence between Lady Gordon Cathcart and the Secretary for Scotland and the Lord-Advocate, with reference to the Seizure and Occupation of the Island of Vatersay by Squatters; and with regard to proposed future arrangements in that Island."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 91.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Men Employed in Dockyards.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will state the number of men now employed at each of the following places, Pembroke Dock, Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham, as compared with those employed on the same date in 1905.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The following statement shows the numbers borne on the undermentioned dates—

Yard.	Numbers borne.			
	4th March, 1905.	3rd March, 1906.	2nd March, 1907.	29th February, 1908.
Portsmouth - -	10,473	8,698	8,651	9,642
Devonport - -	9,055	7,256	7,774	7,955
Chatham - -	9,019	7,069	6,823	7,917
Pembroke - -	2,723	2,213	1,981	2,034
	31,270	25,236	25,229	27,548

Cordite in Hot Climates.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if, consistently with the due maintenance of public interests, he can state the period during which cordite can safely be preserved in hot climates.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) I am afraid it would not be in the interests of the public service to make any statement on this subject.

Salvaging of Torpedo Boat 9—Payment to Workmen.

Sir JOHN BENN (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the raising of Torpedo Boat 99 off Berry Head in August and September of last year; and whether in view of the danger and arduous conditions under which the work was carried out and of its successful termination, it is proposed to make any additional payment to the men employed thereon.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The circumstances connected with the raising of No. 99 Torpedo Boat off Berry Head have been before the Admiralty, and some awards have already been made. It is not proposed to make any additional payments to the dockyard workmen who were employed in connection with this service.

Work of Rural Postmen in Hilly Districts.

Mr. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that two rural postmen in the district of the Chiltern Hills have recently died by reason of the excessive severity of their work; and whether he will consider the advisability of providing those whose duties are in the hilly districts with suitable conveyances for the conveyance of mails and parcels post, and so relieve the heavy strain to which in the past they have been subjected.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will make inquiry on the subject and will acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Scottish Emigrants.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give any statistical information as to age, sex, locality, and occupation, as regards the persons of Scottish nationality who emigrated from Scotland last year.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I can give no information as to the localities in Scotland from which persons came who proceeded abroad. The following particulars give such information as is available upon the other points referred to in the Question—

(1) Statement showing the numbers of Adults and of Children of each sex among the Scottish Passengers (Cabin and Steerage) who left Scottish Ports for, or arrived from, Non-European Countries during the year 1907. (Compiled from the Passenger Lists furnished to the Board of Trade under the Merchant Shipping Acts. Under those Acts Passengers of twelve years of age and upwards are regarded as Adults.)

	Adults.			Children.			Total.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
(*a*) Outgoing Passengers.									
To British North America -	15,753	6,362	22,115	2,142	2,109	4,251	17,895	8,471	26,366
To other British Colonies - -	6	3	9	1	1	2	7	4	11
To Non-European Foreign Countries - - - -	10,357	7,584	17,941	1,968	1,828	3,796	12,325	9,412	21,737
Total - - -	26,116	13,949	40,065	4,111	3,938	8,049	30,227	17,887	48,114
(*b*) Incoming Passengers.									
From British North America -	1,188	628	1,816	113	114	227	1,301	742	2,043
From other British Colonies -	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
From Non-European Foreign Countries - - - -	2,804	1,842	4,646	349	385	734	3,153	2,227	5,380
Total - - -	3,992	2,470	6,462	462	499	961	4,454	2,969	7,423
(*c*) Balance Outward.									
To British North America -	14,565	5,734	20,299	2,029	1,995	4,024	16,594	7,729	24,323
To other British Colonies - -	6	3	9	1	1	2	7	4	11
To Non-European Foreign Countries - - - -	7,553	5,742	13,295	1,619	1,443	3,062	9,172	7,185	16,357
Total - - -	22,124	11,479	33,603	3,649	3,439	7,088	25,773	14,918	40,691

(2) Statement showing the Occupation Groups to which the Scottish Adult Passengers (Cabin and Steerage) belonged, who left Scottish Ports for non-European Countries in 1907. (Compiled from the Passenger Lists furnished to the Board of Trade under the Merchant Shipping Acts. Under those Acts Passengers of twelve years and upwards are regarded as Adults.)

Occupation Group.	Countries in which Passengers contracted to land.			
	British North America.	Other British Colonies.	Non-European Foreign Countries.	Total.
Adult male passengers:				
Agricultural - - -	2,478	—	474	2,952
Commercial and Professional - - -	1,295	—	1,891	3,186
Skilled trades - -	4,923	—	5,719	10,642
Labourers - - -	3,240	—	760	4,000
Miscellaneous or not stated - - -	3,817	6	1,513	5,336
Total males -	15,753	6	10,357	26,116
Adult female passengers:				
Domestic and other service - - - -	1,275	—	1,087	2,362
Dressmakers and other trades - - -	403	—	750	1,153
Teachers, clerks, and professions - -	97	—	187	284
No stated occupation -	4,587	3	5,560	10,150
Total females -	6,362	3	7,584	13,949
Total adults -	22,115	9	17,941	40,065

Parliamentary Printing.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the waste of public money used by the daily printing on the Order Paper of Government Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, and the amendments thereto, which have no prospect of coming before the House; and whether he will take steps to avoid this waste by, as far as possible, placing upon the Paper only those Notices and Orders with which the Government intend to proceed should opportunity offer.

(*Answered by Mr. Whiteley.*) During the early stages of a session it is of general convenience to place all the Government Orders upon the Order Paper, especially when, as in the present session, there has been no volume of amendments to any particular Bill. When there has been such an accumulation of amendments, I have endeavoured to arrange the Orders each day with due regard to economy and will continue to do so.

Pay of Civilians in the Army Ordnance Department in Ireland.

Mr. FIELD: (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will consider the necessity for revising the wages of all the civil employees of the Army Ordnance Department at Dublin and the Curragh, in view of the recent Report of the Board of Trade on the cost of living of the working classes, which shows the cost of living in London as compared with Dublin as 100 and 94 respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) As regards Dublin the wages of the unskilled labourers in the Army Ordnance Department were revised as recently as April last, and there is no reason for believing that in the case of these, or any other Army Ordnance Department employees in Dublin, the rates do not compare favourably with the general rates in the district. The rates of the Army Ordnance Department labourers at the Curragh are somewhat lower, but would appear to be adequate.

Criminal Statistics—Imprisonment in Default of Paying Fines.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the figures on page 26 of the introduction to the Criminal Statistics for 1906, relating to persons committed to prisons in England and Wales in default of payment of fines, the figures showing an annual average for the years 1903–6, both inclusive, of over 100,000 persons so committed; whether he will say, with regard to the 97,382 persons so committed in 1906, how many of these persons were male and female juvenile adults; how many males and females were so committed in default of payment of a fine of 40s. or less; and how many males and females were thus imprisoned who had not been previously imprisoned.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The figures which are given in my hon. friend's Question are correct, but I am sorry that I cannot obtain the further particulars for which he asks.

Bi-lingual System for Irish Ordnance Maps

Mr. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can arrange that the members of the Ordnance Survey working in Ireland shall consult with the local branches of the Gaelic League respecting the correct spelling of the Irish names; and whether a bi-lingual system will in future be adopted on the Ordnance Survey maps.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The names on the original 6-inch maps of Ireland were submitted to and very carefully investigated by three Irish scholars, all members of the Royal Irish Academy, who paid special attention to the correct rendering of names of Irish origin; and such names remain unaltered on the new 25-inch plans so far as they still apply. As regards the comparatively few new names of Irish origin, the council of the Royal Irish Academy have recently supplied us with the names of competent authorities to whom reference may be made in various counties. This arrangement will be supplemented where necessary by reference to a branch of the Gaelic League. A bi-lingual system on the Ordnance Survey maps would be cumbersome; and as it does not appear to have any solid advantages over the present practice the Board cannot recommend its adoption.

Pay of Labourers on Ordnance Survey Work.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if the labourers, who are a special class of men, employed in the Ordnance Survey will be granted a minimum wage of 24s. a week; and if he will take into consideration the expense these men entail in the cost of living, having to move frequently from place to place.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) My hon. friend apparently refers to the unskilled labourers employed with surveyors and others engaged in the field duties of the Ordnance Survey. These labourers are no more a special class of men than are other labourers, who, with no previous experience at a particular kind of labour, have to get used to the work required of them. There seems to be no need to introduce the minimum wage suggested, as there is generally no difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of hands at the present wages, which therefore are presumably adequate to meet the fluctuations in the cost of living referred to in the last part of the Question.

Prohibition of Hay Imports.

MR. SEAVERNS (Lambeth, Brixton): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will explain why the order prohibiting the importation of hay, which was to apply only to hay from European ports and certain South American countries, has been extended to other countries; and will he state in which of the countries prohibited foot-and-mouth disease exists to-day, and particularly whether it exists in Algeria.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The object of the order was to prohibit the importation of hay and straw from countries where we had reasonable grounds for supposing that foot-and-mouth disease actually exists, or where the sanitary precautions taken do not safeguard the country from its introduction, and the list of countries scheduled was prepared on this basis. Owing to the nature of the disease, it is not possible to say in who many of those scheduled countries it actually exists at the present moment, but the latest Returns available go to show that it exists, or has recently existed, in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Russia, Roumania, Netherlands, France, and Germany. As to Algeria we have no definite information, but we have reason to believe that disease has existed there recently. In any case, it must be regarded as a dangerous country.

Pay of Customs Outport Watchers.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury when it is intended to grant an increase of pay to outport watchers in the Customs Department; and if he is aware that the labourers employed by the Dublin Corporation have a much higher rate of wages than the watchers employed at Dublin.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The rates of wages received by these men are adequate for the duties which they perform, and I see no sufficient reason for increasing them. I have no information as to the wages paid to labourers by the Dublin Corporation.

Interest on Credit Balances of Irish Public Departments.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what was the gross amount of interest paid from 31st March, 1907, to 31st March, 1908, on the credit balances, etc., of public departments in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed by the Bank of Ireland that the amount of interest paid and credited to interest-bearing Government accounts at the bank between 31st March, 1907, and 12th March, 1908, was £25,441, and that there was also at the latter date a sum of £11,013, representing interest accrued but not yet paid.

Germany and Great Britain—Imports and Exports.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will say what were the values respectively of our imports from Germany and our exports to Germany for each of the ten years 1898 to 1907, inclusive.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The following statement gives the information desired by my hon. friend—

Year.	Total imports of merchandise imported direct from Germany into the United Kingdom.	Exports of United Kingdom produce and manufactures to Germany.	Exports of Foreign and Colonial produce to Germany.
	£	£	£
1898	28,534,159	22,525,987	10,805,714
1899	30,123,058	25,996,127	11,982,130
1900	31,181,667	27,999,712	10,543,078
1901	32,207,214	23,573,785	10,647,295
1902	33,633,956	22,850,295	10,244,270
1903	34,533,390	23,550,631	10,965,708
1904	33,944,322	25,103,270	11,324,580
1905	35,799,758	29,704,449	13,037,851
1906	38,021,762	33,558,954	14,753,370
1907	38,780,846	41,377,278	15,373,761

Note.—The above particulars of imports from Germany relate to imports received directly from German ports. The figures, therefore, include a certain amount of imports derived from other countries which pass through Germany, but exclude a much larger portion of our imports from Germany which pass through other countries. Particulars of the value of imported merchandise which was consigned to the United Kingdom from Germany can only be given at present for the years 1904, 1905, and 1906, the totals of such consignments being in 1904, £49,512,221; in 1905, £53,838,546; in 1906, £55,907,597.

Land Registration.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether the evidence already taken by the Royal Commission appointed in May, 1906, to consider the expediency of extending the registration system to Scotland, could be published at an early date, with a view to aiding the work of the proposed Royal Commission which is to inquire into the working of the present system of compulsory land registry.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson.*) I think this Question should, perhaps, be addressed to the Scottish Office, but I have no doubt that the evidence taken by the Committee appointed in May, 1906, will be available as soon as the report is made.

MR. ROWLANDS: To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, pending inquiry by the proposed Royal Commission into the working of the present system of compulsory land registry, the Privy Council will consider the advisability of exercising its power to revoke the order making registration compulsory in the county of London, and thereby admit voluntary action on the part of persons desirous of registering.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson.*) I am not able to answer for the Privy

Council but I think it unlikely that it will exercise such power as it possesses to revoke the order in question pending the Report of the Royal Commission.

Post Office Servants in Receipt of Technical Increment.

MR. SEAVERNS: To ask the Postmaster-General if it would be to the advantage of the Post Office to take such steps as are necessary to ascertain how many of those of both sexes in the Post Office telegraph service have, on 31st December, 1907, earned the technical increment; and will he collect the necessary information and give it to the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will consider the matter.

Reduction of Tobacco Duty.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider the question of reducing the duty on tobacco by 2d. per pound to meet the views of Irish manufacturers.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The representations which have been made to me on behalf of tobacco manufacturers both in Ireland and in other parts of the United Kingdom are receiving my careful consideration; but, as I pointed out to the deputation which recently waited upon me, I cannot admit the principle that fluctuations in the price of raw materials are a valid reason for alteration of the rates of duty.

Allowance for Irish Land Purchase.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money he proposes to allow for the purpose of carrying out land purchase in Ireland this year.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The whole question of the financial arrangements in connection with Irish land purchase is under consideration upon the Report of the Departmental Committee, and, pending the general statement which I hope to make at an early date, I am not in a position to say anything on the subject of the Question.

Pensions of Irish School Teachers.

MR. P. A. McHUGH (Sligo, N.): To ask the Chief-Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of teachers in the service of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland who have completed forty years service or more, reckoned from the actual date of their appointment as principal or assistant teachers; what yearly sum in addition to the reduced pensions to which they would be now entitled on voluntary resignation would be required to allow these public servants to retire on full pension; whether representations have been made at any time to the Treasury by the Commissioners of National Education that the addition of a number of years to their actual service should be made so as to qualify a certain section of teachers to full pension; and what has been the reply of the Treasury to these representations.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that it would take a considerable time to prepare a Return of the number of teachers who fall within the description contained in the first part of the Question, and that an elaborate actuarial investigation would be necessary in order to answer the second part of the Question. It does not seem that any useful purpose would be served by procuring the information asked for under these heads, and I do not, therefore, propose to put the Departments concerned to the trouble of preparing it. The Commissioners of National Education have made representations to the Irish Government to the effect mentioned in the third part of the Question, and the matter is under consideration.

Grievances of Inter-Grade and Transition Teachers.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has considered the case made by the inner-grade teachers and the transition teachers, *i.e.*, those in training colleges in 1898 and 1899, in Irish national schools; and whether he can hold out any hope of the redress of their grievances in the matter of classification and salary.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The position of these teachers is fully dealt with in my Answers to Questions put by the hon. Member for North Donegal on

13th February, and by the hon. Member for South Down on 3rd March. If the hon. Baronet will refer to those Answers, he will see that the Commissioners of National Education do not admit that these teachers have any well-founded grievance as regards classification and salary. At the same time the Commissioners have expressed their willingness to consider the case of any teacher which may be brought under their notice, and which has not been already investigated.

Acquisition of Untenanted Land at Dysart.

Sir WALTER NUGENT (Westmeath, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what action, if any, the Estates Commissioners for Ireland have taken with regard to a petition forwarded to them from the people of Dysart, County Westmeath, asking for the acquisition by the Commissioners of the piece of untenanted land known as White Park and another evicted farm known as Big Meadow, which land is situated in the neighbourhood of Dysart, as set out in the petition.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the matter of the estate in question has been referred to their inspector, who will in due course report upon the petition referred to.

Suggested Grant to Mr. R. Pearson, of Clonmore.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether taking into consideration the amount of interest charged during the first, second, and third decades of payment of the loan granted by the Land Commission in 1878 to Mr. Robert Pearson, of Clonmore, Errill, Ballybrophy, Queen's County, Ireland, for the purchase of the property known as Ballyquaide Glebe, Ballybrophy, Queen's County, and likewise the sum deducted from the amount of purchase money received by him for the sale of the same property to his tenants in 1904 under the Act of 1903, he will recommend a reasonable amount of cash being granted to him by the Estates Commissioners by way of allowance.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer which was given to this Question by my right hon. friend the Attorney-General for Ireland on my behalf on 28th February. I have nothing to add.

Sale of the Village of Ballacolla.

Mr. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the village of Ballacolla is to be included in the proposed sale of the estate of Captain Caldbeck; and, if so, can he say in whom the court-house and police barrack are to be vested.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Portion of the village of Ballacalla is included in the estate proposed to be sold to the Land Commission. The documents in the matter are in the hands of the Estates Commissioners' inspector, and it cannot at present be stated whether the court-house and police barracks are included in the proposed sale. No arrangements for resale have yet been made.

Delay in Purchase of the Estate of Captain Caldbeck.

Mr. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what is the cause of the delay in the purchase by the Estates Commissioners of the estate of Captain Caldbeck, Ballacolla, Queen's County; can he say if the delay is due solely to a question of price; if he is aware that an attempt is being made to reserve a portion of the untenanted land for certain individuals already in possession of large farms and business houses, and what course the Commissioners will take in this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the delay in the purchase proceedings has been due mainly to difficulties with reference to the price. The Commissioners have given permission to the owner to arrange, subject to their approval, for the disposal of about 50 acres of untenanted land immediately surrounding his demesne, so that the amenities of the demesne and mansion house may not be interfered with.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Mr. Henry O'Flanagan.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in regard to the case of Mr. Henry O'Flanagan, an evicted tenant on the Blake-Foster estate, now Scottish National Assurance Company, Kinvana, County Galway, negotiations were opened two years ago by the Commissioners with a view to his reinstatement; and whether they will now state when Mr. O'Flanagan's case is likely to be dealt with.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the claim of Henry O'Flanagan, and have referred his case to their inspector with the object of providing him with a holding if possible.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Signal Ratings.

Mr. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the total number of signal ratings borne, and how many have been promoted to the warrant rank of signal boatswain for the past year.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Lambert, Devonshire, South Molton): The Answer to the first part of the Question is 3,315, including 260 boys. There have been no vacancies in the rank of signal boatswain during the past year, and consequently there have been no promotions to that rank.

Manufacture of Torpedoes at Woolwich.

Mr. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many men are employed at Woolwich, either directly or indirectly, upon the production of torpedoes; and whether, when this employment is transferred to the proposed new workshops at Greenock, all these workmen will be employed there, and facilities given for the removal of themselves and their families to that place.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Answer to the first part of the Question is approximately 700. It is the intention to transfer as far as possible the present *personnel* at the Torpedo Factory, Woolwich, to Greenock, and a small Departmental Committee has been appointed to consider how best this can be done with a minimum of inconvenience to those concerned.

Mr. CARLILE asked whether provision would be made for the removal of the families of the men.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Departmental Committee will take that matter into consideration.

Royal Naval Reserve Engine-room Artificers.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will state the number of efficient Royal Naval Reserve engine-room artificers, with the numbers that have first or second-class Board of Trade certificates, and the number that have been promoted to warrant engineer without a Board of Trade certificate.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Answer to the first Question is 521. Sixty more were enrolled at the end of last year, but they have not yet been reported upon after Naval training. The Answer to the second Question is 65, and to the third 12.

Refrigerating Machinery in Ships Magazines.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the first estimate of £500,000 as the cost of fitting refrigerating machinery to the magazines of ships, including all necessary alterations, is likely to be exceeded.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not as far as can be ascertained at present.

Army Reports.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state when the General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September last and the Report on recruiting will be in the hands of Members.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): It is hoped that the General Annual Report which will contain the Annual Recruiting Report will be ready for publication by the end of the month.

The Territorial Army—Promotions to Honorary Rank.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that the regulations for the Volunteer Force prohibited more than one promotion to honorary rank, and that thereby quartermasters were unable to rise beyond the honorary rank of captain, he will make provision in the regulations for the Territorial Army that quartermasters who have received the honorary rank of captain may, after a prescribed term of years, be allowed the further step to the honorary rank of major.

MR HALDANE: Yes, Sir. Provision will be made for this in the forthcoming regulations.

Drill Regulations for Artillery Recruits.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the statements in paragraph 14 of the Order dated 24th February, on the training of the Territorial Force, by which it is explained that drills up to three may be performed in one day, and in paragraph 17, that non-commissioned officers may count attendance at lectures as drills, and privates attendance at physical training as drills, up to a maximum of five drills in each case, apply to the drills set forth in Appendix 2, dealing with Artillery recruits; and how far he regards the forty-five, and afterwards twenty, annual drills, thus reduced, as sufficient in the case of drivers and specialists of field batteries about to be formed.

MR. HALDANE: The provisions of paragraphs 14 and 17 do apply to the number of drills required by Appendix 2. It is considered by the General Staff that the instruction imparted at lectures will, within the limits defined, be of equal value to that imparted at drills, and that the substitution of three physical drills for one ordinary drill will be of benefit to both drivers and specialists of Artillery, and will not reduce their training below what is required.

Netheravon Cavalry School.

MR. CARLILE: On behalf of the noble Lord the Member for the Thirsk Division of Yorkshire, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is possible for Yeomanry officers to qualify for promotion to the rank of field officer by attending a course at Netheravon instead of being attached to a regular cavalry regiment if they so elect.

MR. HALDANE: Only senior Yeomanry officers who are in possession of certificates qualifying for the rank of major can attend the Cavalry School for a refresher course. At present the necessary facilities do not exist at the school to enable more Yeomanry officers to attend. Further, it is considered that attachment to a Regular cavalry regiment is more beneficial to them.

Territorial Army Attestation Form.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the penalties prescribed in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act still remain in force with respect to enlistments in the Territorial Army; and if the revised attestation form does or does not convey any actual change in the provisions of the Army Act so far as they apply to the Territorial Forces.

MR. HALDANE: All the penalties prescribed in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act remain in force with respect to enlistments in the Territorial Force. No change in the provisions of the Army Act applicable to the Territorial Force is conveyed by the attestation.

Sale of Licensed Property by the War Office.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, when the "Coach and Horses," a fully licensed public house, at Hilsea, near Portsmouth, was sold by public auction in July last on behalf of the War Office, the then owners of it, a reserve price was put upon it; if so, whether the reserve price was fixed on instructions from the War Office, and was it so fixed on the basis of the War Office being the owners of a fully licensed property, with a permanent monopoly value, or on what basis; at how many years' purchase on the rental value was the property sold; and did the auctioneer who was instructed by the War Office to sell the property make any announcement before the sale, on behalf of the War Office, that the property in question was likely to be injuriously affected in value by impending Government legislation.

*Mr. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): Before that Question is answered, may I ask whether the reserve price fixed in this case was not, in the opinion of the War Office, the market value of the property to be sold, and whether he has ever known a case in which, when licensed premises were offered for sale, the auctioneer has reminded possible purchasers that the license was an annual privilege, and that the property might at any time be affected in value, either by the action of the justices or by legislation.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of that.

Mr. HALDANE: So far as the supplemental Question is in order my reply is in the affirmative. The Answer to the Question on the Paper is this—the reserve price of the "Coach and Horses" was not fixed on the basis suggested by the hon. and learned Member, but at the amount of a written offer received prior to the sale. The rental, which was fixed at £125 a year on a twenty-one years' lease in 1886 was no criterion of the value of the house at the time of the sale, as the neighbourhood has changed considerably during the currency of the lease. The fact that the lessee, and at least one other bidder were willing to give £10,000 for the property at a time when it was well known that licensing legislation was imminent, seems to indicate that for some years the terms of the lease must have been very profitable to the lessee. The reply to the last part of the Question is in the negative. I may add that the time of sale was not fixed with any idea of realising a maximum price, as has been suggested, but under the rule laid down by a recent Committee on War Department land that all superfluous land is to be sold as leases expire. In this case, the lease expired in September, 1907.

*Mr. GEORGE FABER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, at the time when this property was sold on a basis of monopoly value, he himself, as a member of the Government, was aware that legislation was intended prescribing a time-limit for licensed property?

Mr. HALDANE: The hon. Member seems to suppose that in dealing with the sale of superfluous property, whether licensed or otherwise, I personally intervene and fix the terms. I do not, and most properly do not. As regards the rest of the Question, it was well known that the Government was going to deal with licensing. I think it was perfectly certain, ever since the passing of the Act by the late Government, that the next Government would deal with the question of licensing. The subject has been constantly discussed.

*Mr. GEORGE FABER: May I ask for a specific answer? Did the right hon. Gentleman himself know that a time-limit was to be proposed by his own Government?

Mr. HALDANE: Suppose I did; what difference would it make?

*Mr. GEORGE FABER: I see the right hon. Gentleman declines to reply. I was not aware that there was anything discourteous in my Question. May I ask whether the Government of which he is a member has two standards of value—one when they are selling property and another when they propose legislation?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That is an argument, and not a question.

Gun Statistics.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the respective weights of the following field guns, complete in each case with carriage and limber filled with ammunition: the 18-pounder quick-firing gun, the 15-pounder converted gun for Territorial Army, and the 15-pounder unconverted gun; also the weight of shield complete as fitted to the 18-pounder quick-firing gun.

Mr. HALDANE: The figures asked for are as follows. I have also added those for the 5-in. howitzer. The weights do not include gunners or personal kits:—18-pr. Q.F., 38 cwt., 2 qrs., 26 lbs. (with 24 rounds of ammunition, and inclusive of shield); 15-pr. B.L., unconverted, Mark I., 37 cwt., 2 qrs., 17 lbs.; Mark IV., 36 cwt., 0 qrs., 12 lbs. (with 42 rounds of ammunition); 15-pr. B.L., converted, Mark I., 41 cwt., 3 qrs.; Mark IV., 40 cwt., 1 qr. (with 42 rounds of ammunition); 5-in. Howitzer, 43 cwt., 1 qr., 8 lbs. (with 16 rounds of ammunition). The weight of 18-pr. Q.F. shield, 1 cwt., 1 qr., 21 lbs.

The New Guns.

MR. ARTHUR LEE asked the Secretary of State for War whether, having complied with the request made to him last week, that he should arrange to exhibit the converted 15-pounder field gun to Members of that House, he would also bring up the 18-pounder quick-firing gun, in order that hon. Members might have an opportunity of studying the comparative values of the guns which were to be supplied to the Territorial Army and to the Regular Forces, respectively.

MR. HALDANE: I have already, at the request of the hon. Member, blocked up the Star Chamber Court with field artillery, and to put in any more would, I think, have a deterrent effect. If any hon. Member wishes to see the 18-pounder gun, I shall be glad to make arrangements for him to do so.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Will not the right hon. Gentleman arrange to give an exhibition of these two guns, so that hon. Members may see for themselves the inferiority of the gun to be supplied to the Territorial Army?

MR. HALDANE: You can go down to Woolwich and see them. I am not going to bring these guns up here. These are the very guns which were commended in the House of Lords by Lord Roberts for firing batteries of sixty rounds a minute.

Recruiting Natives in Nyassaland.

SIR C. HILL (Shrewsbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies at what date between 10th February and 24th February last did the recruitment of natives in the Nyassaland Protectorate recommence.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): There has been no recruiting in Nyassaland for the Rand since November, 1906.

South Nigeria—Dwellings for Europeans.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if some means can be found to secure good sanitary dwellings for European officials at Lagos, South Nigeria, with the least possible disturbance to the present proprietors; if the head-quarters of the railway are at some distance from Lagos and are healthy; and, if so, if Europeans could be provided with comfortable houses in or near the same place.

MR. CHURCHILL: Efforts are being made, and it is believed with success, to secure sites for dwellings on the condition referred to. The head-quarters of the railway are situated some four miles from Lagos at the railway terminus. As regards health, there is little to choose between this place—the town of Ebute Metta—and Lagos. Ebute Metta would be quite unsuitable as a place of residence for European officials other than those connected with the railway, and any available land there is no more than sufficient for the necessary extension of the railway premises. It may be added that the aquisition of sites at Ebute Metta would involve the removal of the present residents in the same manner as has been found necessary at Lagos.

Treaty with the Egba Chiefs.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if his attention has been called to the recent meeting between the Commissioner of His Majesty's Government, the Egba chiefs, and people at Abeokuta; will he say if the independence of the people there is secured by treaty; and if he is aware that the people view with extreme suspicion proposals to supervise the chiefs or suggestions to interfere with their privilege of levying tolls.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, Sir. The independence of the Egba country is recognised, subject to certain conditions, by a Treaty made in 1893, but subsequent agreements, both judicial and commercial, have also been entered into. Under the latter, dating from 1903, the native authorities agreed not to add to their list of dutiable goods, or to increase the duties, without the sanction of the Secretary of State. It will be seen, therefore, that the rights of the native authorities in this respect are already limited by the agreements into which they have voluntarily entered.

MR. CATHCART WASON: May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether he is not aware that there are constant efforts being made by merchants and others to induce natives to do away with the tolls? It is a matter of extreme importance.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, I know there are efforts being made to do away with the tolls; and, of course, it would be a good thing if the tolls could be done away with, but they would not be done away with without some other arrangement equally beneficial to the native chiefs being arrived at.

The Nairobi Floggings.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a communication has been received through the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate from Mr. W. A. Burn, barrister-at-law, practising at Nairobi, asking for compensation for unsustained prosecution in connection with the Nairobi flogging incident; and, whether, in view of the opinions expressed by the magistrate in acquitting him, the Government still declines to consider his claim to compensation.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Burn was present in the crowd upon the occasion of the flogging incident at Nairobi on the 14th of March, 1907, and was charged by the police with being a party to those improper proceedings. He was summoned to attend the Court at Nairobi on the 25th March, and after a fair hearing of the case was discharged by the magistrate. There is nothing in this to warrant any claim for compensation, and certainly none will be entertained by His Majesty's Government.

Dinizulu.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, if Dinizulu's solicitor and representatives are allowed to proceed to Zululand to obtain evidence for Dinizulu's defence.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg also to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether Dinizulu's solicitor or legal adviser has been refused permission to enter Zululand for the purpose of investigating evidence on his behalf; and, if so, whether His Majesty's Government will take steps to secure free access to Zululand for such solicitor or other legal adviser, in order that Dinizulu may not be prejudiced in his defence.

MR. CHURCHILL: Complaint of such refusal has been made, but the Natal Government, as appeared from the telegram which I read to the House on 10th March, state that they will give the usual opportunities to the defence to obtain evidence. I am making further inquiries on this head.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether in view of the fact that the chief Dinizulu has been ever since the 23rd of December in prison, and under secret examination before a magistrate in Natal upon charges which have never been specified, and are not based upon sworn information, and considering that this chief is a British subject towards whom the Imperial Government has special obligations, he will consider the advisability of recommending that an application be made to the Supreme Court of Natal for an order for his liberation from custody.

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not gather from my hon. and learned friend's Question to whom he would desire the Secretary of State to address such a recommendation. Obviously it could not be made to the Natal Government, because they are the prosecutors in the name of the Crown, and as to the other party to the proceedings, namely, the prisoner—he is represented by his legal advisers, who will, I feel sure, make such an application to the Supreme Court when they think it desirable in the interest of their client.

*MR. REES: May I ask if it is true that the Government of Natal addressed a minute to the Governor of Natal pointing out the patent untruth of the charges brought against the Government of Natal in this respect?

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, some message of that kind has undoubtedly been addressed to the Governor by the Minister. But the charges were of a very numerous character, and we have asked for specific information on the various points referred to.

*MR. REES: Will the information be communicated in substance to the House?

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. Gentleman is no doubt aware that all the relations between the Government and responsible self-governing Colonies are carried on through a system of Ministerial minutes. As to which of these minutes should be published I cannot say until the times comes to lay them.

White Labour in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, on 31st December, 1905, at the time when His Majesty's present advisers took office, the number of whites employed in the Transvaal mines was 18,159, and whether on 31st December, 1907, it was 17,697.

MR. CHURCHILL: The first figure is correct for 31st December, 1905; the latter is the average figure for the month of December last. In both cases the figures refer only to gold mines.

Portuguese Natives in the Transvaal.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanark, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether natives recruited from Portuguese territory for the Transvaal are permitted by law to become registered as owners of land in the Transvaal?

MR. CHURCHILL: Natives from Portuguese East Africa have, I understand, the same right of purchase and registration in regard to land as natives of the Transvaal.

Health of Natives in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if, having regard to the responsibilities of the Government under the Transvaal constitution in respect of the natives employed in the mines, he will take care that Dr. Sanson, the medical officer appointed by this Government to look after the health of the natives, and who has recently been retrenched by the Transvaal Government, is replaced by some other equally efficient medical officer.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is not in the power of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to make appointments to the Transvaal Civil Service.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Is it not in the power of the British Government to make representations to the Transvaal on a question which was reserved for special consideration?

MR. CHURCHILL: The Colonial Secretary, in the name of His Majesty's Government, can make representations on any subject at any time to any self-governing colony in the British Empire.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will not the Government under the circumstances make representations to the Transvaal Government on a matter which so intimately concerns the well-being of the natives employed in the Transvaal mines?

MR. CHURCHILL: For the last few years, and particularly since the establishment of responsible Government, there has been a steady decline in the mortality of natives on the Rand, and before we could undertake to make special representations on a small point of administrative detail, we should have to be convinced that there was an improper state of things justifying such action. That has not been proved.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the Government take pains to inquire if the conditions now are such as to warrant doing without the services of an inspector whose action has been of such benefit to the natives?

MR. CHURCHILL: Our communications with the Transvaal Government are very numerous, but we are anxious that they should not be more so than in the case of other self-governing Colonies.

MR. **FELL**: Has there been an improvement in the health of the natives?

MR. CHURCHILL: Since 1904 there has been a steady improvement in the mortality rate. It lies with hon. Members asking these Questions, at any rate, to show some *prima facie* grounds for our interfering with a responsible Government in this matter.

Repatriation of the Chinese.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if it is the intention of the Transvaal Government to repatriate the remaining 29,000 Chinese working in the mines and to replace them by natives; and from what country in Central or South Africa will these natives be drawn.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is the declared intention of the Transvaal Government to repatriate the Chinese, and the necessary labour in substitution will, no doubt, be drawn from all those places in which the Transvaal have liberty to recruit; unless, as is hoped, it may be found possible to make a greater use of white labour with improved machinery.

Native Legislation.

MR. **FELL**: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the native question has been reserved in respect of any of the self-governing Colonies, with the exception of the Transvaal.

MR. CHURCHILL: Natal and the Orange River Colony are the only self-governing Colonies besides the Transvaal where the governor is required to reserve legislation imposing special disabilities on persons not of European birth or descent.

Goanese and Indians in British East Africa.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies how many Goanese and Indians are employed by the British East African Government at a gross remuneration of £80 and more a year.

MR. CHURCHILL: I regret that I am not in a position to give the information desired by the hon. Member, but I can make inquiry, if desired.

Land Ordinance for British East Africa.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the new Land Ordinance for British East Africa is now under consideration by the Colonial Office; and whether it will be submitted to Parliament before being despatched to British East Africa.

MR. CHURCHILL: Instructions will shortly be sent with regard to the provisions of the new Land Ordinance which it is intended to introduce in the Legislature of the East Africa Protectorate. There will be no objection to the despatch conveying these instructions being laid before Parliament as soon as it has been received in East Africa.

Proposed Recruitment of Malagasy Labour.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether natives recruited from Portuguese East Africa are entitled under the regulations to bring their wives and children to the Rand at the expense of the importers, as in the case of the Chinese; and whether, in the event of natives from Madagascar being recruited for the Rand, such provision will be made.

MR. CHURCHILL: The question of recruitment from Madagascar is not yet sufficiently advanced to make it worth while even to consider, still less to decide, the exact regulations which would be necessary to secure decent and healthy conditions for such labour. Natives of the actual Continent of Africa are recruited for short periods of six months or a year, and do not, as the hon. Member is aware, bring their wives and children with them to Johannesburg.

Treaty between Great Britain and Siam.

MR. GIBBS (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government have satisfied themselves that the results of the treaty now pending between Great Britain and Siam would be beneficial to British trade in those parts.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir EDWARD GREY): British trade interests will, of course, be borne in mind. But my right hon. friend is waiting till he receives a draft of the terms which are proposed, and he must have an opportunity of considering them before he can answer questions on the subject.

Russian Tea Duties.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Russia proposes to remove the surtax on Indian and Ceylon teas entering the Empire by way of the Black Sea or other European ports.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Representations have recently been made to the Russian Government on the subject. No reply has yet been received.

Egyptian Government School-Sports.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now state if the sports competition for Government schools has been fixed by the Ministry of Education in Egypt, on the advice of Mr. Dunlop, for Friday, 20th March; whether an announcement had previously been made that a mourning ceremony for the late Moustafa Kamel Pasha is to be held on that date; and whether, in view of the profound esteem in which the pasha was held by the Egyptian people, he will instruct the British Agent to advise the Government to hold the sports competitions on some other date, and to allow the students of the schools to participate in the public tribute of respect to the memory of Moustafa Kamel.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend learns that the usual date of the sports would have fallen within a few days of the mourning ceremony. In these circumstances it was decided some time ago to postpone them this year till 19th April, about a month after the ceremony. It is very much to be regretted that a statement which was the exact opposite of the truth should have been circulated.

Egyptian Students and the Funeral of Moustafa Kamel Pasha.

MR. KETTLE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now state if Mr. Dunlop, Adviser to the Ministry of Education in Egypt, advised the Government to inflict punishment on the students of the Government schools who attended the funeral of the late Moustafa Kamel Pasha; whether some years ago when a Mr. De Vere, a professor of gymnastics, died, Mr. Dunlop requested the students of the Government schools to attend his funeral; whether any students have, in fact, been punished; and what is the nature of the punishment employed in the Government schools.

MR. RUNCIMAN: If the hon. Member will send to my right hon. friend the information on which his Question is based, my right hon. friend will ask for a Report on the question of punishments in schools.

Licensing Compensation in London.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the sum of £327,763 18s. 3d. awarded as compensation for non-renewal of licences at the supplemental meetings of the County of London Quarter Sessions on the 27th and 28th days of January, 1908, of which the sum of £46,542 was assigned to the licence holders, whether he can say, approximately, how the remainder, amounting to more than £280,000, was distributed, how many brewery and distillery companies participated in it, and what were the amounts allocated to any of these companies.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I am indebted to the clerk of the compensation authority for the County of London for the following figures:—Of the sum of £281,221 to be distributed to parties other than the licence holders, a sum of £195,376 is to go to brewers and distillers, and the remainder, £85,845, to ninety-two other parties. There are thirty-eight brewers and one distiller, each interested in from one to ten cases, and receiving total sums varying from £50 to £24,674.

The Children Bill.

LORD EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state, with reference to Clause 22 of the Children Bill, under what Vote in Committee of Supply would it be possible to criticise or call in question the acts or decisions of inspectors appointed by him under the Bill.

Mr. GLADSTONE: It is clearly right that hon. Members should be able to raise such points in Committee of Supply, and Amendments will, if necessary, be moved when the Bill is in Committee to remove any doubts as to whether such criticism would be in order on the Vote for the Home Secretary's salary.

Manufacture of Explosives—Case of Messrs. Kynoch.

*Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware of the Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, that the offence of Kynoch, Limited, in adding mercuric chloride for the purpose of masking the only available test, was one liable to be a cause of great danger in that with explosives so treated there is no means whatever of finding out if they are dangerously unstable, and that a test would lead to the belief that dangerously unstable explosives were fit for prolonged storage, hot climates, or drastic treatment for purposes of thawing them; and, in view of the statements conveyed therein of the way the lives of miners, soldiers, and sailors have been hazarded, what punishment has been visited on the firm.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Large quantities of Messrs. Kynoch's explosives were placed under seizure and proceedings were instituted against the firm in various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, for breach of the terms of their licence. At Grays they were fined £25 and the explosive was ordered to be forfeited. Further legal proceedings were stayed in pursuance of the terms of the agreement which I fully explained to the House in my statement of the 27th June last. These terms included the acceptance of the magisterial decision, and the withdrawal of their appeal. The severe losses, direct and indirect, which the firm have sustained, have, in my opinion, inflicted a heavy penalty upon them.

Mr. RIDSDALE (Brighton) inquired whether Messrs. Kynoch had been removed from the list of contractors.

Mr. GLADSTONE: That has nothing to do with my Department. The Question should be addressed to the Secretary for War.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry): Is it not a fact that Messrs. Kynoch agreed to a verdict being given against them on technical grounds, and the Home Office agreed to withdraw all imputations of any kind whatever; and does the right hon. Gentleman think it fair, therefore, to use the Order Paper of this House to repeat this charge?

Mr. GLADSTONE: The facts stated by the hon. Member are substantially correct.

*Mr. BELLAIRS: Was the definite charge of using chloride in order to facilitate passing the heat test withdrawn?

Mr. GLADSTONE: It was an admitted fact.

Pembroke Explosion.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives of 6th November, 1906, concerning an explosion which occurred in the County of Pembroke, was not issued until November, 1907, after the adjournment of Parliament.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The Report referred to was kept back while certain proceedings against Messrs. Kynoch were *sub judice* and pending the settlement which I explained to the House on the 27th June last. Much correspondence ensued in connection with the terms of the settlement; and it was not until the end of October that it was deemed proper to issue the Report. The delay had no connection with the adjournment of Parliament.

Licensing Proposals.

Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer upon what statistics of population to acreage he based the proposals in the Licensing Bill for a reduction of on-licences to a statutory proportion to population; and whether he will lay the statistics upon the Table of the House.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The scale of statutory reduction was obtained by applying the principle recommended in Lord Peel's Report as to the ratio of licensed premises to population in "town" and "country" respectively to the known variations in the density of the population in different areas, so as to form a graduated scale between the least and the greatest density. The general basis is to be found in the Census figures, but the mode in which the scale will operate will depend on the infinitely varying circumstances of every ward and parish. It is impossible to show these variations by statistics.

Mr. YOUNGER: May I ask if the Government have launched their scheme entirely on the recommendations of the minority report of the Royal Commission, and without really inquiring into the effect of the application to the various districts of this reduction?

Mr. GLADSTONE: The Government examined a great many sample cases, and came to the best conclusion they could.

Mr. YOUNGER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the majority of the Commission made no such recommendation at all?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I do not know whether you wish us to accept all the recommendations of the majority Report.

Irish Weaving Industry.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will appoint a small committee of manufacturers and hand-loom weavers to inquire and report whether it is desirable to mark Irish hand-woven damasks in such a way as to protect this home industry, with a view to early legislation on the subject.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Kearley, Devonport): The Board of Trade see no reason why the manufacturers and hand-loom weavers should not confer together with regard to the establishment of a recognised mark for Irish hand-woven damasks in such a way as to indicate their Irish origin. If, however, the hon. Member wishes to suggest compulsory legislation for the purpose, I must point out that no inquiry with a view to the compulsory marking of home products could be limited to a single article of trade.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): Will the hon. Gentleman use his influence to secure that the words "Irish hand-woven" are worked into the damasks, and thus help to restore the industry of Ireland?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that.

Housing Bill.

Sir J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if he can state the day on which he proposes to introduce the Housing Bill.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): I cannot at present fix a day, but I hope to introduce the Bill at an early date.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): Can the right hon. Gentleman say if this Bill will include Scotland—the land of his birth?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I have hope in that direction.

Rates in Agricultural Districts.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what were the average rates in agricultural districts throughout England and Wales on agricultural land, and on other hereditaments, for the years 1899–1900 and 1906–7, respectively.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: Agricultural districts cannot be exactly distinguished for the purposes of the statistics relating to local taxation. The only rate generally levied in the 13,000 rural parishes in England and Wales is the poor rate. In a few of these parishes there is also a burial rate, which is similar in all respects to the poor rate. In the year 1899–1900 the average rate in the £ of these rates, in all the rural parishes, was just under 2s. 9d. In the year 1905–6, which is the latest year for which similar information can be given, the average rate was rather over 3s. 9½d. The average rates in respect of agricultural land were in each case one-half of the amount.

Road Repairing and the Unemployed.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if, taking into consideration the disrepair of the roads throughout the country, many of which have not been re-metalled for a number of years, he will take steps to compel county, urban, and rural district councils to put such work in hand where necessary, thereby giving employment to many men who are at present a burden on the rates.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am not empowered to compel the local authorities mentioned in the Question to put in hand work of the kind to which my hon. friend refers. I may, however, draw his attention to Section 10 of the Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act, 1878, under which county councils may enforce on highway authorities the performance of their duty in respect of the maintenance or repair of highways, if complaint is made to them on the subject.

MR. MYER asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would appoint a Commission to report on the state of the roads throughout the country.

MR. JOHN BURNS said he could not at this moment comply with the hon. Member's request; but within the last few months work of this kind had been projected which would give work to the type of men mentioned by the hon. Member.

Rural Markets.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the difficulties which arise in the present state of the law in regard to the establishment and control of cattle and other markets in rural districts; whether he can see his way to introduce a Bill on the subject this session; and, if so, when.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been drawn to this subject. I hope to be able to introduce a Bill with regard to it during the present session; but I cannot at present fix a date for the purpose.

MR. CATHCART WASON asked whether the Bill would give power to prevent the offering of diseased cattle for sale in public yards.

MR. JOHN BURNS: That subject has nothing to do with the object of the Bill.

MR. CATHCART WASON said it had a good deal to do with this question.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Yes, after the markets are established.

Politics in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will give equal rights to all political associations formed by postal servants.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Yes, sir; I have done so, and propose to continue to do so.

Falkirk Telegraphists' Wages.

MR. J. M. MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that according to the recent Returns of the Board of Trade the cost of living at Falkirk is 97 per cent., as compared with 98 per cent. at Glasgow and 100 per cent. at Edinburgh, and that the wages paid to telegraphists rise to a maximum of 56s. per week at Edinburgh and Glasgow, as compared with 44s. at Falkirk; and whether it is proposed to readjust the Falkirk scales in accordance with the cost of living in that town.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Parliamentary Committee recommend that the classification of each town should depend on the volume of work and on the cost of living. The volume of work at Falkirk is 161 units, which places it provisionally in Class IV., the units of work of which are between 120 and 240. The volume of work at Edinburgh is 4782 units, and at Glasgow 7404, which places them in Class I. The cost of living at Falkirk does not appear to be higher than at Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Liverpool and Hong Kong Mail Route.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General what is the net, as distinguished from the gross, revenue obtained from mail matter despatched by the Liverpool and Hong Kong route, after allowance has been made for the cost of collecting this mail matter, of conveying it to Liverpool, and of any handling in the course of transit which is not provided for by the contractors.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The analysis of the general cost of the Inland Postal Service in such a manner as to show the actual cost of a particular section of the service is a matter of great complexity and some uncertainty. Moreover, the deduction of that cost, if it could be ascertained, from the gross revenue, would not give a fair measure of the proper sum that should be paid for the remainder of the service, since, if postage rates are uniform, some services are necessarily less remunerative than others. Probably my hon. friend's object will best be met by stating the amount which would have to be paid at Postal Union transit rates if the service from Liverpool to Hong Kong were performed by another administration, instead of going by the Canadian Pacific service. That sum is estimated at rather under £20,000.

Projected Non-provided Schools.

MR. MYER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state how many proposed new provided schools, the plans of which have been submitted by the local authorities to the Board of Education, are at present awaiting its approval; whether in one county there are at least eighteen so hung up; and if he can state the reason for the delay.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The number of plans which have been submitted to the Board and have not yet been approved could only be ascertained with great difficulty. A considerable number are, of course, necessarily suspended pending the expiration of the statutory period of notice required in the case of new schools or enlargements by Section 8 of the Act of 1902. I am not aware of any unnecessary delay and cannot identify the county to which my hon. friend refers, but if he will inform me of the cases which he has in view I shall be happy to make inquiries and to let him know the result.

MR. MYER: Are there eighteen in the county of Middlesex?

MR. MCKENNA: Now that my hon. friend has named a county I will inquire.

Attendance Regulations.

LORD EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the words, children in attendance as computed by the Board of Education, in Clause 2 of the Education Bill, mean children in average attendance; and, if not, what is the meaning of those words.

MR. MCKENNA: I am considering the possibility of replacing by some more satisfactory system the present method of computing what is known as "average attendance," which is open to serious objection on several grounds, among others, as affording a pecuniary inducement to retain children in school who, for medical reasons, ought to be excluded. Any change would, however, apply to the whole system of grants, and until certain inquiries which I have recently instituted into the working of the present system and the effects of various possible bases are completed, I cannot make any statement on the subject. Any changes, however, which are ultimately adopted in this respect will necessarily be of such a nature as not to alter materially the numbers in each school on which grants are calculated, or upon which Clause 2 of the Bill will turn.

Swansea Education Dispute.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he has received any reply from the Swansea local education authority to the letter of the Department dated the 10th February.

MR. MCKENNA: I am informed that the Education Committee have drafted a reply to the Board's letter of the 10th February, which will be submitted to the town council at a meeting to be held this week.

House of Commons Library

MR. ALDEN: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he has found it possible to make such alterations, structural or otherwise, to the existing Library as would allow a large number of modern standard works to be placed therein; and whether he can make any statement upon the subject.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): I have made careful search for waste spaces which might be available for the storage of books which are in little request, and I have found sufficient to enable me to give in the future considerable relief to the shelves of the Library proper and I hope that thereby accommodation may be afforded for the improvement of the Library in historical, biographical, and constitutional works. I will, if necessary, ask the House at a later date to assent to a Supplementary Estimate for the work of increasing the storage accommodation, which I am sure will command the general approval of Members.

Importation of Straw from Dunkirk.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, in reference to the cargo of straw brought from Dunkirk, being a district affected with foot-and-mouth disease, by the ship "Fram" to Dublin, and the landing of which was prohibited and prevented on its arrival by a Special Order issued by the Vice-President of the Agricultural Department in Ireland, whether any, and what, precautions were taken by the Agricultural Department in England to prevent it subsequently landing in Great Britain; whether it was so prevented; and, if not, is he able to say what became of the cargo.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): The Board had no evidence to show that there was any exceptional danger attendant on the landing of the cargo of straw to which the right hon. Member refers, and they therefore took no special steps in the matter. They are not in a position to say what became of the cargo. The General Order which was issued on the 4th inst. with regard to the importation of foreign hay and straw was of course not then in force.

The Tuberculin Test.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether cattle suffering from indigestion or other indisposition caused by a sea voyage commonly re-act to the tuberculin test.

MR. J. A. PEASE: It would not be correct to say that non-tuberculous cattle suffering from indigestion or other indisposition caused by a sea voyage commonly re-act to the tuberculin test. Such cattle may, however, and frequently do show irregularities of temperature for a few days after landing which make it impossible correctly to interpret the result of the test.

MR. COURTHOPE: Is it not the fact that many cattle sent from this country to Argentine are slaughtered immediately on arrival?

MR. J. A. PEASE asked for notice.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether cattle sent from this country to the Argentine are subjected to the tuberculin test immediately on arrival?

I beg also to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture will request the authorities of the Argentine Republic to keep British imported cattle in quarantine for at least four days before subjecting them to the tuberculin test.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The Argentine General Sanitary Regulations of 1903 provide for the application of the tuberculin test to imported animals at the end of the period of 40 days, during which they are quarantined. We have no knowledge that this requirement has been in any way modified, nor have we received any complaints on the subject. No representations to the Argentine Government appear therefore to be called for.

MR. COURTHOPE: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the Report which stated that the animals were slaughtered one or two days after arrival after examination by a veterinary surgeon? Will he inquire if that is correct?

MR. J. A. PEASE asked for notice.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the tuberculin test is of very doubtful value?

MR. J. A. PEASE asked for notice.

Parliamentary Printing.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the waste of public money caused by the daily printing on the Order Paper of Government Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day, and the amendments thereto, which have no prospect of coming before the House; and whether he will take steps to avoid this waste by, as far as possible, placing upon the Paper only those Notices and Orders with which the Government intend to proceed, should opportunity offer.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey): During the early stages of a session, it is of general convenience to place all the Government Orders upon the Order Paper, especially when, as in the present session, there has been no volume of amendments to any particular Bill. When there has been such an accumulation of amendments, I have endeavoured to arrange the Orders each day with due regard to economy, and will continue to do so.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the desirability of placing in some conspicuous place the programme of forthcoming business.

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY: The programme is usually announced on Thursdays for the succeeding week, and if any alteration is subsequently made, a Question is usually prompted, but if there is any general desire that a paper should be posted in the outer lobby, it can be done.

Enfield Lock Small Arms Factory—Compensation for Accidents.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a man named West, employed until recently at the Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, met with a serious accident to his arm in July, 1885; a very serious accident to his leg in October, 1886, which has left a running wound, and which has had to be under medical care ever since; the total loss of one eye on the 17th May, 1887, for which the Government gave him £23, and then docked his wages 10s. per week till it was paid back; that he was ruptured in May, 1905; that some hot metal almost destroyed the sight of his remaining eye in 1907, leaving him almost blind; and that he met with a serious accident to his hand, destroying two fingers, happening subsequently; and whether this man, now aged sixty-two, was discharged without any compensation; and, if so, whether he will take his case into his favourable consideration.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. As I informed the hon. Member for Enfield on the 10th instant, the question of rendering any further assistance to this man presents grave difficulties and I am not yet in a position to say whether anything can be done for him. I should point out, however, that the hon. Member is not correct in his statement of the facts; for example, West received £73 not £23 as compensation, and it is not the case that he was docked 10s. per week of his wages till the money was repaid. It is true, however, that immediately after the accident he was re-employed at wages lower by 10s. than he had been receiving, but after a little more than a year he was put back to his old rate of wages and continued at that rate until in September, 1902, when he was fifty-eight years of age, they were increased by 4½d. a week. On retirement he was granted a gratuity of £29 18s. 6d.

Shader Landing Place.

*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state when the proposed works at the landing place at Shader, Island of Lewis, are likely to be commenced.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I can add nothing to the information which my hon. friend has already received from the Congested Districts Board, except that if the works are not begun before the 4th proximo the Congested Districts Board propose to cancel their grant.

Island of Lewis Water Supply.

*MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the Scottish Office state that the local authority in the Island of Lewis are not in possession of sufficient funds to admit of any satisfactory improvement being effected in the supply of water in the insanitary townships, will he state how he proposes to deal with the matter, especially bearing in mind that nearly every outbreak of fever in the island has been attributed to the defective water supply.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am glad to inform my hon. friend that some progress is being made. The Local Government Board are informed that during the past three years four new wells have been sunk and three more are expected to be completed by May.

*MR. REES: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the people of Stornoway have twice held indignation meetings to protest against the insanitary character attributed by the hon. Member to their salubrious island?

*MR. WEIR: Is not the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs aware that Stornoway is not the Island of Lewis.

Case of Robert Simpson, of Glasgow.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in connection with the case of Robert Simpson, of Glasgow, who was sentenced on 12th June last to five years penal servitude, his attention has been called to the facts that letters admitting the authorship of the telegram and purporting to come from John Hill, an important witness who was not produced at the trial, were received on the 10th and 23rd July; that these letters are held by experts to be in the same handwriting as the telegram for writing which Simpson was found guilty; and whether in view of the facts that the juries in the civil action and in the criminal action differed as to Simpson having written the telegram and that 40,450 people have petitioned in favour of reduction of the sentence, he will order this man's release or reduce the punishment.

MR. SINCLAIR: The inquiry which has been made into the whole facts and circumstances of this case discloses no ground for action in either of the directions suggested by my hon. friend.

MR. WATT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the jury in the civil action after long consideration found this man not guilty of having written the telegram, and ought not that to have some bearing on his decision.

MR. SINCLAIR'S answer was inaudible.

Trawlers Certificate Suspension Bill.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that last year instructions were given by the Secretary for Scotland to block the Trawlers Certificates Suspension Bill, will he state whether it is his intention to adopt a similar course this session.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Answer is in the affirmative for the reasons which I have communicated to my hon. friend.

MR. WEIR: I want the information for my constituents?

MR. SINCLAIR: The Answer is too long to be read in the House, but I will issue it as unstarred if the hon. Member wishes.

Fine on a Glasgow Butcher.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the fine recently imposed on a Glasgow butcher for having exposed a carcase for sale which was found to be tuberculous; and whether, in view of the fact that it is perfectly competent to a qualified authority to say whether an animal is tuberculous or not during life, that the said animal was passed as sound by the Glasgow authorities, and that the butcher acted in good faith, he will consider what steps in the interests of justice he should take.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have inquired into the case referred to by my hon. friend. The sale, or exposure for sale, for human food of unsound meat is an offence under the Public Health Act, and the butcher in question appears to have been convicted of a contravention of this Statute. The facts mentioned could have been brought to the notice of the sheriff, and it does not appear therefore that any action on my part is called for.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Had the inspectors of meat no responsibility in the matter? Many of them saw the carcase.

MR. SINCLAIR'S answer was inaudible.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S): Are these inspectors at Glasgow veterinary surgeons?

MR. SINCLAIR asked for notice.

Scottish Offices Vacant.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland when it is intended to fill up the vacant offices of limner and historiographer.

MR. SINCLAIR: The filling up of these offices is under consideration, but I am not able to make any statement at present.

MR. RIDSDALE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that sums for these offices appeared in the Estimates?

MR. SINCLAIR: My Answer admitted this.

MR. RIDSDALE: What has become of the money already voted?

MR. SINCLAIR'S answer was inaudible.

Hely Estate Evicted Tenant.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps are about to be taken by the Estates Commissioners to reinstate Mr. James Brennan (now of Killadooley, Ballybrophy, Queen's County, Ireland), who was evicted from his holding on the Hely property at Folkscourt, Johnstown, County Kilkenny, in 1897.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the case of James Brennan, and have decided that he is suitable to work a holding. The case has been referred to an inspector with a view to providing Brennan with a holding if possible.

Duncormack Letter Deliveries.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if Duncormack is included in the list of villages on the Rosslare line of railway to which it is proposed to give a second delivery.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I regret that it will not be practicable to provide a second delivery at Duncormack, as the amount of correspondence which would be benefited is not sufficient to justify the cost involved.

Duncormack Telegraphic Needs.

MR. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a telegraph is badly needed in the village of Duncormack, as it is in close proximity to a railway station and has a petty sessions court and police barrack, with several extensive business houses; and whether, as the nearest telegraph office is three or four miles away, he will meet the wishes of the people of this village by giving them a telegraph office.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am sorry to say that the probable amount of telegraph business at Duncormack is not sufficient to warrant the extension of the telegraph system to that place except under guarantee. Terms for an extension under guarantee have been twice offered, viz., in 1901 and in 1906, and I am having inquiry made with a view of ascertaining whether the terms offered on the last occasion can still be quoted.

Kingstown Harbour Mail Pier.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will lay upon the Table of the House the correspondence which has passed between his Department and the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company in connection with the proposed running of the London and North Western Company's steamers to the mail pier at Kingstown Harbour.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I presume the correspondence referred to is the correspondence now in progress. I should have no objection to the publication of the correspondence when completed. But I should be glad to confer with my hon. friend as to whether it is necessary to have it published as a Parliamentary Paper.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to allow me to see the correspondence?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is not yet complete.

Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if any, and, if so, can he now state what decision, has been arrived at with regard to the *status* and conditions of employment of clerks to surveyors of taxes, as a result of the deputation which waited on him last year on the subject.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): I regret that, as I explained the other day to the hon. Member for East Leeds, who has interested himself in the case of these clerks, the inquiry has taken longer than I anticipated; but I hope to be very shortly in a position to arrive at a decision.

Scottish Small Holdings Bill.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Government intend to reintroduce the Scottish Small Holdings Bill which was rejected by the House of Lords on 11th March.

Mr. ASQUITH: I am not in a position at present to make any statement on this subject.

Land Tax.

Mr. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in connection with the Financial Statement of this year, he will consider the possibility of exempting charities and friendly societies from the payment of land tax when the total income from land of such charities and friendly societies is less than £160 per annum.

Mr. ASQUITH: The question of exempting from land tax charities and other corporations whose income from all sources does not exceed £160 has already received my careful consideration, but, for the reasons given in my reply to a Question by the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division on the 26th March last, to which I would refer my hon. friend, I do not think that any sufficient ground exists for altering the present law. The case for discrimination between different charities on the basis, not of total income, but of the amount of income derived from land alone, appears to me to be still less sustainable.

Army Votes.

Mr. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, with a view of providing further time for the discussion of the number of men required for the Army, he would undertake to place the Report of Vote A, Army Estimates, first of the Reports of Supply.

Mr. ASQUITH: I regret that it is not possible for me to comply with my hon. friend's request, since a promise has already been given to place one of the Navy Votes first upon Report of Supply.

Hayti: Despatch of British Warships.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Is there at present a British warship in the vicinity of Hayti, where a serious outbreak has occurred, and, if not, will the Government send one to protect British subjects?

Mr. ASQUITH: Orders were sent this morning for the despatch to Hayti of the "Cressy," an armoured cruiser of 12,000 tons, and of the "Indefatigable," a protected cruiser of 3,600 tons.

NEW BILL.

CALENDAR REFORM BILL.

"To reform the Calendar, fix Easter and other and more Bank Holidays; and for other purposes in relation thereto," presented by Mr. Robert Pearce; supported by Sir William Bull, Mr. John Deans Hope, and Mr. Corrie Grant; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 24th March, and to be printed. [Bill 155.]

SUPPLY [3RD ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9 (VOTE ON ACCOUNT).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £21,805,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909, viz.—

CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS II.

	£
Board of Agriculture and Fisheries	65,000

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Post Office	6,500,000

CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS II.

Ireland—

Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction	95,000

CLASS I.

	£
Royal Palaces	20,000
Osborne	5,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens	52,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings	18,000
Salisbury Memorial	1,000
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain	30,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain	25,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings	40,000
Revenue Buildings	250,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain	230,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom	90,000
Harbours under the Board of Trade	20,000
Peterhead Harbour	10,000
Rates on Government Property	300,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland	95,000
Railways, Ireland	30,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England—

House of Lords Offices	10,000
House of Commons Offices	20,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments	40,000
Home Office	75,000
Foreign Office	24,000
Colonial Office	25,000
Privy Council Office	5,000
Board of Trade	100,000
Mercantile Marine Services	25,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Charity Commission	15,000
Civil Service Commission	17,000
Exchequer and Audit Departments	25,000
Friendly Societies Registry	3,000
Local Government Board	85,000
Lunacy Commission	5,000
Mint (including Coinage)	5
National Debt Office	6,000
Public Record Office	10,000
Public Works Loan Commission	1,200
Registrar-General's Office	15,000
Stationery and Printing	330,000
Woods, Forests, etc., Office of	8,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	36,000
Secret Service	40,000

Scotland—

Secretary for Scotland, Office of	25,000
Fishery Board	7,000
Lunacy Commission	2,500
Registrar-General's Office	1,500
Local Government Board	5,000

Ireland—

Lord-Lieutenant's Household	2,000
Chief Secretary's Offices and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	1,000
Local Government Board	30,000
Public Record Office	2,000
Public Works Office	16,000

Registrar General's Office	5,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey	7,000

CLASS III.

United Kingdom and England—

Law Charges	30,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses	28,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	150,000
Land Registry	16,000
Public Trustee	1,000
County Courts	2
Police, England and Wales	15,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies	320,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain	130,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	15,000

Scotland—

Law Charges and Courts of Law	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh	15,000
Crofters Commission	2,000
Prisons	35,000

Ireland—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	25,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	43,000
Land Commission	110,000
County Court Officers, etc.	40,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police	60,000
Royal Irish Constabulary	615,000
Prisons	50,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	4,000

CLASS IV.

United Kingdom and England—

Board of Education	7,000,000
British Museum	60,000
National Gallery	17,000
National Portrait Gallery	3,000
Wallace Collection	3,000
Scientific Investigation, etc.	28,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	75,000

Scotland—

Public Education	850,000
National Galleries	3,000

Ireland—

Public Education	760,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	400
National Gallery	2,000
Queen's Colleges	2,500

CLASS V.

Diplomatic and Consular Services	250,000
Colonial Services	350,000
Telegraph Subsidies and Pacific Cable	25,000
Cyprus (Grant in Aid)	49,000

CLASS VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	300,000
Miscellaneous, Charitable and other Allowances	1,150
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	17,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiencies	——

CLASS VII.

Temporary Commissions	25,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	4,740
Repayments to the Local Loans Fund	——
Ireland Development Grant	100,000

Revenue Departments—

Customs	350,000
Inland Revenue	830,000
Total for Civil Services and Revenue Departments	£21,805,000"

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon), in moving to reduce the sum by £1,000, said: My object in moving the reduction which stands in my name on the Paper is to obtain from the Government some explanation of their proceedings both before and after the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland, and also some assurance as to the general policy to be observed and the methods of treatment to be adopted in any such cases as may unhappily, if it should be so, recur in this country in the future. Now, although I am perfectly ready to admit there can be no absolute immunity from outbreaks of this kind, yet I do say that undoubtedly, with care and watchful attention on the part of the Board of Agriculture, at all times, and prompt and even instantaneous action when it is needed, future outbreaks both can and ought to be prevented. I think I am also bound to add this, that from the information which is now before us, it does appear to me that the recent outbreak at Edinburgh ought to have been prevented. In support of this statement —and I hope to detain the Committee for a very short time only—I will begin by reminding the Committee of the history of the proceedings, and of the circumstances in connection with the re-admission into this country of foot-and-mouth disease, after Great Britain had been perfectly free from that most injurious pest for a great number of years. This is a very grave and serious matter to the agricultural community, as well as to the country at large, and I hope to get a satisfactory explanation from the hon. Member who is to-day representing the Board of Agriculture. I am afraid we cannot yet say we are out of the wood, although happily there is reason to believe that the disease at all events has been arrested, and I hope with all my heart that it is so. If it has been, then I should like to add this, that, in my humble opinion, no praise can be too great for the officials and inspectors of the Board of Agriculture, to the men who have actually done the work and have succeeded in arresting in so short a time a disease which, as everyone knows, is the most difficult to contend with and to get rid of when once it has broken out in the country—in fact, there is, in the whole world, no more insidious disease or one more difficult to prevent spreading, because the infection is carried by every imaginable means, even by birds and game, and it is therefore important that every conceivable precaution should be taken. Now, the circumstances to which I wish to allude are the following:—In November last, on the 15th of that month, the Board of Agriculture was warned by a letter from the Central Chamber of Agriculture in London, which has a permanent Committee sitting on this question, of the great danger there was at that time of the reappearance of the disease in this country. I think I am fully entitled to read that letter. It is addressed to the Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, and says—

> "The attention of the Central Chamber has been called to the fact that there is a large quantity of hay and straw, especially the former, now being landed at different places on the east coast; that much of this hay and straw is coming from Holland and Belgium and that there is some uneasiness among the farmers of East Anglia, who, knowing that foot-and-mouth disease is very bad in those two countries, fear that the infection may be carried into this country by these means. My Committee direct me to bring this matter to your notice, and to express a hope that the Board will take every possible precaution to prevent this disease being brought here."

I think everybody will admit that that was a very reasonable and proper letter for a body representing agriculture to have submitted to the Board, and that they were thus taking a course which was in all respects perfectly justified. I am not aware what answer was returned by the Board of Agriculture. I have never seen one, but all at events no action, so far as I know, was taken at that time in the direction desired, either by restricting or by prohibiting the import of hay or straw from these infected districts into this country. The landing of hay and straw from the infected districts was permitted to continue unchecked. I do not know whether any safeguards were taken at all, but the consequences were under the circumstances very far from unnatural, because on 5th February, foot-and-mouth disease again made its appearance in the United Kingdom, and an outbreak was announced at Edinburgh. How did the disease get there? The hon. Gentleman, the Member for South Somerset, who represents the Board of Agriculture in this House, and who, we hope, is now recovering from the indisposition which keeps him away at present, told us on the 26th February, in reply to a supplementary Question which I put to him, that the hay in the present case was imported from the Netherlands, where foot-and-mouth disease had been very prevalent during last autumn and the present winter; the hay was used for bedding certain cows for three days before the first symptoms of the disease became apparent, and within two days afterwards, 81 out of 110 cows were found to be affected. On the same day the hon. Member stated that the hay which was used on the premises where the first outbreak occurred was, there was no reasonable room for doubt, the medium by which the infection was introduced into this country. That is the statement of the Board of Agriculture itself, and in face of it there can be no doubt whatsoever as to the means by which this disease was again permitted to find its way into Great Britain. While upon that I put to the hon. Member across the Table another Question. I said to him—

> "Am I right in supposing that this disease has been re-admitted into the country because the Board of Agriculture thought fit to neglect the warning that had been already given to it by the Central Chamber of Agriculture in London."

The hon. Member replied to me in a somewhat irritated tone—I will not say more than that—

> "The right hon. Gentleman is to suppose nothing whatever of the kind."

Now, I want to know, because it is the only inference I can draw from his reply, and at that time I did not wish to be unnecessarily harassing, whether the Board of Agriculture had any idea in their minds that there was some other source to which the outbreak could be traced. I hope the hon. Member in charge of this matter will deal with that point to-day, because if the Board had no other idea in its mind it is perfectly clear I was right in the Question which I put at that time, and that it was the introduction of this unfortunate cargo of hay from an infected district on the Continent which produced this outbreak of disease. As a matter of fact, that has practically been admitted already by the Board of Agriculture, but still I should be glad to know if they really had any other idea in their minds, and if they think that the disease has been introduced by any other cause whatsoever. Now I come to another point which appears to me to be stranger than anything else, and that is the attitude of the Board of Agriculture after the outbreak had actually occurred. They had had three months, since November in the previous year, to learn everything about foot-and-mouth disease and fodder in the Netherlands and other infected districts of Europe. Early in February, my hon. friend the Member for Rye, who is one of the most persistent, active, and energetic guardians of the agricultural interest in this country, put another question to the Board of Agriculture, and to this I am going to ask the attention of the Committee. He asked the Member for South Somerset, with regard to the letter addressed on 15th November by the Central Chamber of Agriculture to the Board of Agriculture, in which it was stated that the importation of hay and straw from Holland and Belgium was likely to convey foot-and-mouth disease into this country, and having regard further to the fact that the disease had broken out in close proximity to one of the ports from which the importation of continental hay and straw was taking place, whether the Government would prohibit the importation of hay and straw from all countries in which foot-and-mouth disease existed. Unfortunately I was not in the House at the time this Question was answered. But I must say it seems to me most extraordinary that such a reply as was made should have been given by the Government Department which had charge of this particular interest. The reply was to this effect—

> "The matter to which the hon. Member refers is receiving very careful consideration, but our information on the subject is not complete and no decision can as yet be arrived at respecting it."

Why, they had had the matter before them for three months, and I affirm this and challenge and defy contradiction that it is the imperative duty of the Board of Agriculture, at all times when there is this danger about, to make themselves perfectly acquainted within a limited number of hours with all the conditions with regard to the disease and infected fodder and everything of that kind, and unless they are in a position to take the necessary prompt and instantaneous action upon such information we shall never be safe from the incursions of this disease at any time whatever. A more extraordinary reply to have emanated from the Board of

Agriculture I never recollect since that body came into existence, and to tell me that the Board of Agriculture requires three months in which to make itself informed on this question is so remarkable a statement, that I can only say, if it were true, it would show that the present organisation of the Board for acquiring information is absolutely fatal to the welfare of this great industry. But I do not believe that it is true. So far as I know the Board has it in its power to get information at almost any time and from any place, and I think we ought to have some explanation from the hon. Member for Saffron Walden, who unfortunately does not actually represent the Department in this House, as to how it is when the Board has had the condition of affairs brought to its notice three months beforehand it states, in reply to a question in this House, that its information is not complete, although it must have been within its knowledge that foot-and-mouth disease had been exceptionally prevalent on the Continent during the autumn and the larger part of the winter. I want to know how the Board can justify itself in taking up that position. This is the most remarkable thing of all. After the outbreak had occurred the Board of Agriculture could not make up its mind to issue the necessary orders to prevent the importation of this infected matter. Questions were put to them, not from this side of the House alone, not from any party motives whatever, but from all sides of the House, from hon. Gentlemen who knew what the danger was, who were well acquainted with the question and who recollected what had happened in former days, and nowhere did it come more frequently from than from the Benches on which the Irish Members are in the habit of sitting, and it was not until after the disease had actually spread and a second outbreak had occurred that the Board of Agriculture thought it fitting to take any action at all, and then it was not to issue an Order, but to give orders for the preparation of an Order, and I do not know how many weeks it was after these orders had been given before the Order was actually issued. One explanation of that long delay that was given, I confess I have never been able to understand. If it was right to issue the Order at all, it must have been right to issue it at the time of the outbreak or immediately after. Why was it not done? Why was it delayed till actually a month after the outbreak? It was the most unreasonable thing I ever heard of. The Government knew perfectly well that the disease was owing to the importation of this infected stuff, and it is of the more importance because of the answer to the Question which I put to the hon. Gentleman to-day. There was a case of infected straw being taken to Ireland. The hon. Member who is in charge of agricultural interests in Ireland got wind of this. He got information. It came from an infected district, and I have his answer to a Question upon the subject, and I am going to quote this, as it will show the remarkable contrast between the way this kind of thing is dealt with by the Board of Agriculture in Ireland and the Board of Agriculture in England. The hon. Gentleman's attention was called to this cargo by a question from an Irish Member, and he was asked what had been done. What he says is this—

> "I received information on Thursday last that a ship called the "Fram" was about to sail from Dunkirk with a cargo of straw for Dublin. That was an infected district and I anticipated the general Order by issuing a special Order prohibiting the landing of the cargo on its arrival."

I asked whether any similar precautions or any precautions had been taken by the Board of Agriculture to prevent the landing of that cargo of straw subsequently in England. I gathered from the reply of the hon. Member to-day that the Board of Agriculture saw no exceptional danger in the admission of that particular cargo of straw, and that they had taken no steps to prevent it, and if I rightly understood the hon. Member they did not even know what had become of it. I am quite sure, and I think my opinion will be shared by hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House, that we should like to hear something more upon that subject. We should like to know on what grounds it was that the English Board of Agriculture had satisfied themselves that there was perfect safety in admitting this cargo. I think it will be difficult, knowing as we all know that it did come from a district infected with this most odious of all cattle diseases, and I shall wait with profound interest to hear from the hon. Gentleman on what grounds it is that he is satisfied that the agricultural community in England should be treated in matters of this grave importance with so much less care, and that they should be submitted to so much more risk, than are their brother agriculturists in Ireland. I hope the hon. Gentleman will give his special attention to this point, and give us some further information upon it, because if it was necessary in the one case it must undoubtedly have been necessary also in the other. I have dwelt on this branch of the subject because it is really the one point on which I anticipate still further danger in regard to this question, that is, from the long permitted importation of this fodder into various parts of England since these districts have become so dangerous as we now know by the unfortunate experience of Edinburgh that they have. This disease is so insidious and it lies dormant so long in fodder that is unused, that at any time when it may be used we are not free from the danger. The germs may be there and the thing may start unexpectedly in some other part of England where the fodder has been allowed to be sent. I was very sorry to hear what the hon. Member told me about the Irish cargo, because I am afraid it is no use asking him how many cargoes of fodder from these infected districts have been permitted to land in this country during all these three months, now nearly four, during which the Board of Agriculture took no action whatever. It is really of such serious importance that I think it would be worth while even now, and I do not believe it is necessarily too late, if the Board of Agriculture would make every possible endeavour to trace all the cargoes that may have been admitted during that time, to learn what became of them and to take every precaution within their power to prevent their being used. Of course, if they treated so lightly this cargo which was refused admission by the Irish authorities, I am terribly afraid they will neglect what I should consider their duty. I know the hon. Gentleman said he considered they had acted with very commendable promptitude, because in the whole history of this outbreak, except in the time of the cattle plague, which I should think was before he could actually remember himself, the importation of hay and fodder of that kind had never been stopped. The hon. Gentleman forgot that the whole position is completely altered in that respect, not since the days of the cattle plague, but since even the later outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease because hay and fodder were imported in those days to the smallest possible extent if at all, and these large importations of hay and straw which come in now are comparatively speaking a modern trade. At all events they were not conducted in anything like the same proportions years ago as has been the case lately. Therefore, I think it requires different treatment now from what it might have done then. I am sorry if I appear to be insistent in trying to enforce the importance of this question upon the House of Commons, but I do it because I recollect all these things for a great number of years past, and I doubt very much if any man living has had more to do with combating them and getting rid of them from this country than I have. If I were asked what is the most important duty of the Board of Agriculture in this country, I should say without the smallest hesitation that their first duty above all is this, to prevent the incursion of this disease into the United Kingdom, and to maintain the security of our flocks and herds against disease. These diseases are not indigenous to this country. They always come from abroad, and we are perfectly safe so long as you can prevent this disease being imported, and I say so for these reasons. Firstly, because of the enormous amount of time, labour, trouble, and money that were spent in days gone by—an amount that would be startling to any Chancellor of the Exchequer in these days—before we were successful in getting rid of them, and, secondly, because if once they were re-admitted, and especially at this time, the loss and ruin, and the difficulty of ever getting rid of foot-and-mouth disease again would be something absolutely incalculable. I remember being warned by perhaps the greatest expert on this question that ever lived, the late

Professor Browne, who was for so many years the head of the Veterinary Department of the Board of Agriculture, who said—

> "Remember this. If ever this disease unhappily was admitted again and once got a hold in the country, all our cattle and our sheep being practically virgin soil for them it would fly like wildfire and there would be such a scene of devastation as never was witnessed."

It is for these reasons that I have ventured to occupy the attention of the Committee for a short time this afternoon. I assure the hon. Gentleman opposite that I am speaking without any party feeling or party motive. It is a matter of supreme importance, of the greatest importance that anything could be to the agricultural community at the present time. I have given full credit to the Board of Agriculture for arresting disease as far as they have done so, but what we want to see is a little more energy, a little more promptitude and effective action before the disease has got into the country, without running the enormous risk of not being able to arrest it after it has come in. If I am successful at all in that direction I shall be satisfied that the time I have occupied has not been wasted. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item Class II., Vote 11 (Board of Agriculture and Fisheries), be reduced by £1,000."—(*Mr. Chaplin*).

*Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he had a few words to add to what his right hon. friend had said upon this question, and he also wished to refer to one or two other cattle diseases. He was extremely sorry that the hon. Baronet the Member for South Somerset was not present. He thought the hon. Baronet would agree with him when he said that the present session had shown to an extraordinary degree the very great inconvenience which arose owing to the fact that there was no directly responsible representative of the Board of Agriculture in this House. The experience of this session should induce the Government to appoint a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, who should sit in the House of Commons when the President sat in another place, because very important subjects arose upon which it was imperative that there should be some responsible officer of the Board of Agriculture, not only for them to shoot at when anything arose, but who would be able to bind the Board to what he said. This drawback was shown in a remarkable degree the other day when the question of the milk supply was discussed by an influential and important deputation to the Local Government Board, when there was no one present representing the Board of Agriculture. Everybody would admit that the question of milk production of this country concerned the Board of Agriculture quite as much as the Local Government Board, and it was unfortunate that there was no one to represent in a thoroughly representative capacity that great Department. With regard to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, he did not think the President of the Board of Agriculture realised what an appalling disease it was. He could assure the hon. Member now representing the Board of Agriculture that foot-and-mouth disease would travel down the wind in exactly the same way as small-pox, and the risk was quite as great. The disease, moreover, was very much more difficult to deal with and to check. Considering the extraordinary danger of a disease of this kind to the general prosperity of this country, he thought the Board of Agriculture had failed entirely in their duty of protecting the flocks and herds by really prompt action. He was not finding any fault with the permanent officials, because they had acted with the greatest possible promptitude and energy, but that was not sufficient. The controlling mind of the Department was, as far as one could judge, vacillating and weak, with the result that the officers who would have acted more promptly and energetically, and probably would have avoided subsequent outbreaks, were unable, in the absence of a strong lead, to do what they otherwise might have done. It seemed an extraordinary thing that the Board of Agriculture should be unable to act as promptly as the Board of Agriculture in Ireland. Nothing could exceed the promptitude with which that body acted. From the moment the outbreak was reported in Ireland, not only was the importation of cattle stopped, but the importation of hay and straw from all Continental countries was absolutely prohibited. He thought the Board of Agriculture in this country was deserving of the greatest condemnation, because at least one cargo which was rejected in Ireland was actually allowed to land in this country. Surely the Board of Agriculture in this country might have acted at least as promptly and strictly as the Irish Board. He was not going to enlarge upon that question, but he wished to refer to a statement made by the President of the Board of Agriculture when he was being pressed to use this Order to prohibit the importation of hay and straw. He said—

> "The necessary negotiations are going on with other departments."

If the House looked at the powers conferred upon the President of the Board of Agriculture by the Diseases of Animals Acts they would see at once that conferences with other Departments were unnecessary, because he possessed the greatest possible powers, and any importation which might bring infection to our cattle could be stopped at a moment's notice by a stroke of the pen, without reference to anyone else. And yet the Board of Agriculture had allowed all these weeks to elapse before the importation of this dangerous stuff was prevented.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield): You cannot do that without the co-operation of the Customs Department.

*MR. COURTHOPE said that when the President of the Board of Agriculture had statutory powers himself it was not necessary for him to ask the permission of the Customs officers. That was done in Ireland, and it could be done in England. Then there was the important question of the hay and straw used for packing, which involved very great danger. It was well-known by everybody who had inquired into this subject that a very considerable quantity of hay and straw came from Continental countries, where it was used as packing for china and furniture. It was also well-known that in the case of a former outbreak of this disease in 1885 it was traced to hay and straw which came into this country as packing with German furniture, which was unpacked in a park where there was a very valuable herd of cattle, and the whole lot went down with the disease. ["No, no."] At least that was the view of the Board of Agriculture at the time, and he did not think, after twenty-three years, one could get away from facts which were admitted at the time. Knowing the risk caused by hay and straw used as packing coming into this country, and being sold in the ports of entry as litter for use in urban cowsheds and stables, it was only natural that those representing the Chamber of Agriculture and other agricultural bodies should have pressed the Board of Agriculture to extend the Prohibition Order to hay and straw imported in this way. He had the honour of introducing a deputation to discuss this point the moment the outbreak was reported, and the President of the Board of Agriculture asked them to write to him, making such recommendations as they thought were most practical and proper. After carefully considering the question and considerable consultation they recommended this course, which he thought all would admit was quite reasonable—

> "That notice should be given to the Boards of Trade of the various countries concerned that after a certain date (one month from the time of the notice was suggested) no goods would be admitted into this country packed in hay and straw from those affected countries, and in the meantime prompt measures should be taken for securing the destruction of hay and straw imported into this country on the premises where the goods were unpacked so that it should not be sold as litter."

The President of the Board of Agriculture laughed at that suggestion, and said—

> "No, agriculture is a very unimportant industry compared with many other industries, and we must not upset trade."

They afterwards pointed out that hay and straw were not indispensable for packing purposes, that many other materials could be used, and that a month's notice would have given ample notice to foreign manufacturers without upsetting their business. By refusing to take this step the Board of Agriculture had failed most gravely in their duty as the custodians of the health of the flocks and herds of this country.

He wanted to say a word about the question of swine fever. There was very grave dissatisfaction among swine owners in this country with the action of the Board of Agriculture with reference to the matter of swine fever. The Report of the Cattle Diseases Committee which, in January last, was submitted to and approved by the Council of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture contained the following—

> "Your Committee note with extreme satisfaction the remarks made by Sir Edward Strachey (the representative of the Board of Agriculture in the House of Commons) to the North-East Somerset Farmers' Club, on 13th instant, on this subject. After pointing out how the number of outbreaks had fluctuated, and the alarming increase in the number during the last two years, he stated—as his personal opinion—that the Board of Agriculture must begin the consideration of this matter *de novo* (as has so often been urged by your Committee and by the Council), and suggested the appointment of a Departmental Committee as the only way of trying to solve the question. Your Committee accept this view, and strongly urge the President of the Board of Agriculture to appoint such a Committee, with a reference which will enable an inquiry to be made into the whole question, without loss of time."

The President refused to do anything of the kind. He made some amendment in the orders applying to the question of swine fever, but he declined either to hear expert opinion on the subject, or to consider it *de novo*, or to appoint a small Departmental Committee. The greatest dissatisfaction was felt with the amended Orders which had been issued by the Board. It was felt that they would not begin to solve the question. This matter would involve the country in considerable annual outlay, and it would conduce to ultimate, if not immediate, economy if it were taken in hand promptly from the beginning, and dealt with in a sensible and business-like manner. He thought this was a point which showed how undesirable it was that hon. Members of this House who did not really represent the Board of Agriculture should be in a position which led the public to think that they represented it. He had read an extract from a speech by the hon. Member for South Somerset, but the Board of Agriculture had gone in a direction absolutely opposite to that indicated in the speech. He hoped the hon. Member who spoke on behalf of the Government to-day would be able to tell the Committee that the President of the Board would reconsider the position *de novo*, and that he would appoint a Departmental Committee to inquire with the view to such steps being taken as might be necessary to deal effectively with the matter. On the subject of the exportation of pedigree stock from this country to the Argentine he had already obtained the opinion of the Board from the hon. Member opposite in answer to Questions. All who had at heart the welfare of agriculture in this country must admit that those answers were very unsatisfactory indeed. There was a Regulation in the Argentine according to which cattle sent from this country were to be quarantined for forty days and then submitted to the tuberculin test. If they did not pass that test they were immediately slaughtered, and there was no question of compensation or anything of the kind. It happened that the Argentine Government had for some years run a stud ranch on their own account with the object of providing bulls for the ranch holders and stock breeders of the Argentine. The large stock owners preferred the pedigree shorthorn bulls and other pedigree stock sent from this country to any bred out there, and the Argentine Government presumably thought it necessary to interfere in order to protect their own business, and instead of keeping the animals in quarantine for forty days they now applied in many cases the tuberculin test immediately, or almost immediately, after their arrival. It was an undoubted fact that animals suffering from indigestion or other forms of indisposition, call it *mal de mer* if they liked, reacted to the tuberculin test, and a very large percentage of the animals were slaughtered. The Argentine Government did not want this undesirable competition which affected their business, and by such means they were protecting their own stud farms. He hoped the hon. Member would assure the Committee that the Board of Agriculture would institute an inquiry and ascertain whether the forty days quarantine were always carried out, and would take the necessary steps to ensure that our animals received fair treatment when they arrived in the Argentine Republic, because that was a matter of the greatest possible importance to the stock-owners of this country. A great deal of valuable stock was bred here and sent to the Argentine, and it would be a serious blow to our trade if the Argentine Government by any unfair means like those referred to were allowed to stop this legitimate business which the stockowners had been carrying on. A short time ago a large importer, an Englishman, who held land in the Argentine, and who imported a large amount of pedigree stock, found that about 70 per cent. of his bulls from this country —bulls for which he had paid a large amount—were slaughtered on arrival because they reacted to the tuberculin test. That gentleman asked the Argentine Government in the interest of justice to allow one of their inspectors to take up his residence in this country to undertake the duty of inspection before the cattle were shipped, and he offered to pay all the expenses. He mentioned this to show the motive that underlay the action of the Argentine Government, and he thought that probably his being able to show them up in that way would induce the Board of Agriculture to make prompt and effective inquiries into the matter and to take such steps as they could with other departments to secure fair play to British traders.

*Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): I think perhaps I may claim some indulgence to-day when I state that I have been at somewhat short notice, owing to the illness of a colleague, called upon to reply for a great Department of the State with reference to this debate. I think perhaps it would be fair to the House and the country to make at once a statement in regard to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon alluded in his opening speech. The outbreak undoubtedly, in the opinion of the experts of the Board of Agriculture, is attributable to the cargo of hay which was obtained from Holland in November last. It was opened out on 29th January at a place called Gorgie, near Edinburgh, and on 1st February a certain number of cattle were found to be ailing. A veterinary surgeon was called in, and on 4th February the cattle were certified by him to be suffering from foot-and-mouth disease. Very prompt action was taken by the Board of Agriculture and the cattle were all slaughtered on 9th February. Two other outbreaks subsequently took place, and those responsible took the greatest care that every one in the herds was slaughtered, and even all the cattle which had come in contact with these three particular outbreaks within a distance of three miles. There were 244 cattle slaughtered, and the net cost to the country was about £4,000. The course taken was right if for no other reason than that it was necessary for the Board of Agriculture to do its utmost to stop an illness of this kind. The Board of Agriculture are quite as fully aware as the right hon. Gentleman opposite and others who have spoken of the terrible character of this disease, and they desire, of course, to take immediate steps to suppress it. I am very glad to say that, so far as the expert opinion of the Board of Agriculture is concerned, we are out of the wood and that there is no further outbreak anticipated, or at all probable, in connection with this last outbreak. I am glad to be able to say that from the killing of rats, the destruction of all material which came in contact with the cattle, the disinfecting of the premises, and the proper safeguarding of the premises, this attack has been thoroughly stamped out. In regard to the origin there is no doubt that it came from The Hague, and was brought in by the cargo of hay in the "Nigel" from an infected country, namely, Holland. When it was suggested in the first instance that it was due to this hay the Board of Agriculture did hesitate for a moment to accept that suggestion because there were other portions of the cargo sent into other districts. For instance, sixty bales were sent to Leith, and it was used as fodder for horses. In the other two cases where it was used no result appeared similar to that at Gorgie. That being so, the Board had to accept the fact that while a portion of the cargo might be infected the whole cargo was not necessarily so.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London): Will the hon. Gentleman say whether horses are in the habit of catching foot-and-mouth disease?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: Yes, just in the same way as cattle. Then, with the view of preventing another outbreak of the disease, the right hon. Gentleman had sought to censure my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Agriculture for not prohibiting the import of hay and straw from infected countries abroad and for not issuing an Order so prohibiting the import for a whole month after the outbreak at Gorgie. I would remind the Committee of the history of the investigation into this matter. When the right hon. Gentleman himself was in charge of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1885, and subsequently of the Board of Agriculture in 1892, when Mr. Hanbury was at the Board of Agriculture, and subsequently when Mr. Fellowes and Lord Onslow were there, pressure was brought to bear on all of them to do exactly that which we have been condemned by the right hon. Gentleman for not doing, viz., to exclude foreign importations of hay and straw from any affected country. No one is going to censure the right hon. Gentleman for neglect of his duty in 1885 and 1892, but if we are to be censured, surely every word of his censure and denunciation recoils on his own head. What are the facts? Under the pressure placed on the right hon. Gentleman he consulted his experts whether hay and straw should be prohibited from coming into this country from infected countries, and he acted as advised. He considered then that the danger was hypothetical and not real, and for twenty-five years the policy of this country has not been changed. We have allowed hay to come into this country, year by year, to the extent last year of 90,000 tons from non-infected countries and 65,000 tons from infected countries. Well, we have never had any outbreak attributable, in the opinion at any rate of many people who have considered this matter, to imported hay and straw. The case which occurred in 1885 quoted by the hon. Member for Rye was where it was thought that a certain amount of hay which had come from abroad, and which came in contact with a herd part of which was in Bedfordshire, had conveyed the foot-and-mouth disease. In connection with that particular case another outbreak took place a short time before. The cattle were slaughtered and the railings with which the cattle had been enclosed were buried. Just before the outbreak referred to by the hon. Gentleman the railings were dug up and placed in position again. It is very much more probable that the second outbreak was attributable to the railings taken from the ground, and put in contact with the cattle, than to the imported hay.

*MR. COURTHOPE: Were they iron railings?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I think they were timber railings. But it was not cleared up as to what was the cause of that particular outbreak. At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman did not act in 1885 on that outbreak to exclude foreign hay, and not one of his successors had done so.

MR. CHAPLIN: Was foreign hay imported then in anything like appreciable quantities?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I have not any information on the point.

MR. CHAPLIN: There was none. It is quite a modern trade.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I believe that in those days hay was used for packing, which is one of the objects for which the right hon. Gentleman desired to have hay included in the Order which has been recently issued by my noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture. When the right hon. Gentleman and his friends are so anxious to keep out the import of foreign goods into this country the Government ought to satisfy themselves that there is some real proportion between the danger of infection and the loss of trade which may result from such an Order, and Lord Carrington and the Board of Agriculture thought that they were not justified, having regard to the experience of the past twenty-five years in acting suddenly as if they were in a panic, in regard to the introduction of hay and straw into this country. They, first of all, wanted to ascertain how much hay and straw came into the country and found that in 1906, 65,700 tons of hay and 78,000 tons of straw valued at £378,000 were imported. To destroy the whole of that trade was not a matter which could be very lightly undertaken, and the Board had to be satisfied that, at any rate, those who advocated the exclusion for years and years of foreign hay and straw from this country were actuated by a single motive, or whether like many of us they unconsciously might have been influenced by other motives in regard to any exclusion, for the benefit of the producer and to the detriment of the consumer. The Government are not only responsible to the producer, for, as in 1893, prices may rise to the benefit of the farmers, but also responsible to other sections of the community—the consumers—and they desire to see that the quality, health, and reputation which have been such a distinctive character of English stock should be maintained. When the Government came to the conclusion, after looking into the question of the extent of the hay which might be prejudiced by this Order, and this outbreak having been attributed to hay, they did not think that a month was too long to look round as to the effect a prohibition of the import of hay and straw would have on trade. And they thought it would be an injustice to a particular individual who had engaged a cargo to come into this country to prevent it, because there was no reason to apprehend that that shipload on board the "Fram" at Liverpool contained any infection any more than the straw contained infection which was allowed in by the right hon. Gentleman and his successors during the past twenty-five years.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): What about compensation for destroying the straw?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I do not know what the law is on that question, and I would not like to speak definitely on compensation; but at any rate the Board thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger from that particular cargo any more than from the 78,000 tons of straw which we have been receiving for many years past into this country from France and elsewhere. It has been said that other materials than hay and straw might be used for packing and that the Order should include the straw and hay required for packing merchandise as well as for litter and fodder. The Government have taken a different view. They have thought it unnecessary to prejudice the many trade interests involved by an extension of the Order. Sawdust has been suggested as a substitute for straw; but in many cases eggs are imported from places where sawdust is not available. Besides, sawdust would make the cases heavier and the carriage more expensive. Again, straw comes from special districts for hats and bonnets, and the Government hesitated to prevent that straw coming into our ports.

*MR. COURTHOPE: Straw of that kind was not included in our recommendation; we expressly excluded all straw which had undergone a process of manufacture.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I am told that if straw were prescribed it would include the straw for hat-making, bottle packing, and other industries, and the Government were not prepared to extend the prohibition beyond straw and hay used for litter and fodder purposes. The hon. Member for Rye alluded to the absence of a representative of the Board of Agriculture at the meeting with the deputation which waited upon the President of the Local Government Board a few days ago. I regret the absence through illness, not only of my noble friend, but of the hon. Member who represents the Board of Agriculture in this House. The Board of Agriculture realise that in connection with the milk industry the interests of producers as well as consumers should be considered, and in any legislation to deal with this very difficult problem the Board of Agriculture will be consulted by the Local Government Board, and *vice versa*, and we trust that an amicable arrangement will be come to in the interests of both consumers and producers, and that no injustice will be done to the stockowners in this country. In regard to infection referred to by the hon. Member opposite, while we admit that the risk of infection is very great, I do not think that we should exaggerate its amount in the way the hon. Member did. It is perfectly true that infection may be carried down-wind, but only if carried down-wind by some material, and not through the air itself. I am given to understand that that is the only way in which infection can be taken; it must be by contact with an article which has been infected by an infected animal. There are two other subjects to which the hon. Member alluded. In regard to swine fever, I think perhaps it will be of interest to the House if I explain to them, that although a great deal of dissatisfaction exists among farmers in connection with regulations in regard to swine fever, yet the policy of the Board of Agriculture for the last fourteen years has been a consistent policy and has also been a very successful policy. It is almost absurd to pick one year and compare it with its predecessor, and you can draw no very accurate conclusion by taking one selected year and comparing it with another selected year. But I have taken the trouble to take out the averages of the fourteen years during which the swine fever regulations for the slaughtering of infected swine and swine supposed to be infected have been in operation. I find that there is an average in the first five years, 1894 to 1898, of 58,000 swine slaughtered each year, with a view of reducing swine fever. The average in the next five years brings it down from 57,900 to 16,000, and the average of the last four years, up to 31st December last, brings it down from 16,000 to 7,000 a year. That is very satisfactory, and I do not think the President of the Board of Agriculture ought to act hurriedly in a matter of this kind, when the diminution of swine fever is very marked under the existing regulations. It is, unfortunately, true that last year the amount of swine fever in this country was greater than the year before, but it is equally true that there has been a diminution of swine fever during the first ten weeks of this year, as compared with the first ten weeks of last year, and we trust that diminution may go on. There has been, as probably hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are aware, a new regulation arranged in connection with swine fever, which, I believe, will help very much the movement of swine, especially for slaughtering purposes, and will mitigate the inconvenience which many traders hitherto felt, and the President of the Board of Agriculture wishes to see how these regulations operate for a year or so before he feels justified in appointing a Committee, or taking any steps to alter the system which has existed so successfully for the last fourteen years. I think it must be also a source of gratification to this Committee to know that the number of swine in Great Britain is 2,636,766, an increase of 13½ per cent. for last year over the year which preceded it, so that the swine industry is really increasing in amount at the same time as we believe the swine fever is diminishing in extent. We can only trust that that is so, and that this very difficult problem may be eventually solved, to the satisfaction not only of the farmers, but also of the consumers, who are equally interested in the suppression of this disease. In regard to the last point raised by the hon. Member for Rye, I should like to say, so far as the Board of Agriculture is aware, and so far as I am aware, no complaints whatever have been received by the Board in connection with the unfair treatment of English cattle which have been sent to the Argentine. If, however, the hon. Member will communicate with the Board of Agriculture in regard to any case where he feels that unfair treatment has been meted out, inquiry will at once be made, and I trust that thereby any repetition of the case which he gave to to the House, and which in one instance caused considerable dissatisfaction, will be avoided.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER wished to congratulate the Board of Agriculture on their prompt action in connection with the foot-and-mouth disease. He thought that, upon the whole, they did all that they possibly could, but at the same time the hon. Member for Rye was naturally trying to carry out his duties, being in opposition, in trying to find fault with all that they had done and urging them on to greater care. Although he could not agree with him that the Board of Agriculture ought to prohibit the packing of goods in hay and straw from infected countries, yet he thought some regulation might be established preventing this hay and straw, in which goods had been packed, from being used as fodder for horses or cattle, or at any rate from being sold as fodder. He believed that china and earthenware had to be packed in straw, and it was almost impossible to prohibit its importation in that way, but it was, he thought, quite possible for the Board of Agriculture, or the Board of Trade, or the Local Government Board to prevent hay and straw imported in the form of packing from being used for fodder for horses or cattle at the present time. It was a very important thing in regard to the cattle which produced milk, because it was among these, in large towns, that there was most danger of such diseases breaking out and spreading, as the animals were crowded together and had less open air than in the country. That was a point which he should very much like to impress upon the authorities. He sympathised with his hon. friend in his difficult task of having been suddenly put in charge of a Department, which, although it did not hold the position it ought, was one of the most important Departments of the Government. He hoped that before long the Board of Agriculture would be able to assert itself a little more and be more powerful than it was at the present moment. If a little more power and a little more money were put at its disposal for carrying out the necessary work it had to do throughout the country it would be better. He thought that a good deal of some of the delay in carrying out this work was caused by want of money and the necessary number of officials, which a Board of this kind must have to carry out the very arduous duties it had to perform. The hon. Member for Rye had asked why in one case the Department did not prohibit the cargo coming in and pay compensation for it, but no Department had a right to spend money without the sanction of this House. They could not spend money and confiscate a cargo of goods without. The authority of this House, although perhaps a responsible Minister might take the matter into his hands and order the hay to be destroyed and come to the House afterwards. He considered that there ought to be a Member of this House to answer for the Board of Agriculture with more responsibility for it, and he hoped that before very long that might be the case. As to swine fever, he could only congratulate the hon. Member on the very excellent figures which he had given to the House, and he hoped the farmers would realise them. The farmers were always grumbling about swine fever not being extirpated. One year it went down a little and another year it went up; he wished that the figures were more known to farmers and that they studied them more. There was one other point which had not been mentioned that day, but was a very important one which should be impressed upon the Board of Agriculture, and that was the spread of anthrax, which had been breaking out in many parts of the country. Some twelve months ago he knew of a case in which there was a grave suspicion that the refuse from a horse-hair factory went into a stream and infected certain horses who were down the stream. There had been several cases from time to time in which human beings had been infected with the disease, but that, of course, came under another Department. But the case as regards animals was serious as it was a very dangerous disease, not only to the animals, but owing to the fact that they might give it to human beings. He hoped that inquiry might be made, and that something would be done before long to frame some kind of regulations to be issued by the Local Government Board and the Board of Agriculture, because he thought that double regulations were required to prevent anthrax from spreading in this country, as it had been increasing and was a very serious disorder.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he could well understand the position in which his hon. friend found himself in replying for the Board of Agriculture that afternoon, and he could assure him that it was unpleasant for him to make any criticisms on the hon. Member: he would rather have made them upon the person who legitimately represented the Board, and was responsible for the Department. There were one or two points to which the attention of the Board of Agriculture should be called. The hon. Member had made clear to the House the imminent danger that lurked in the importation of hay from a tainted source, and he did not know until he heard the hon. Member speak of it how great that danger was. As they had heard, a cargo came over from Holland in November; it was held over to January, when it was unpacked, and it was not until then, the end of that month, that it spread forth its infection, and led to the outbreak which they deplored. It showed how sudden the danger was, and how long it could be retained in a cargo imported into this country. The hon. Member was able to show that the Board of Agriculture acted with promptitude upon this outbreak, and that they exerted themselves in destroying all the rats which were about the infected premises. As a matter of personal interest he should like to know by what process that was achieved. He had tried to destroy rats by using one of the most advertised preparations to kill these pests. He took two rats and fed them upon nothing else but the "poison," and they flourished so exceedingly that eventually he had to liberate them and destroy them with a stick. He therefore would like to know the method pursued in this case. The line of defence taken by the hon. Member that Presidents of former days had not done any better was not a good line to take. If agriculture had any chance at all it could only learn as the years went by, and, therefore, he desired to enter a caveat against the argument that because it was not necessary to take precautions in days gone by it was not necessary to do so now. He also protested against the tone of the hon. Member's remarks which seemed to imply that on no account was the interest of agriculture and the protection of the flocks and herds to be the first necessity for action in these matters, but that on the contrary, they were to wait as long as possible and to be careful that they gave every other trade every possible chance, and that they were practically to expose agriculture to dangers to which they were unwilling to expose other trades. What the Committee wanted from the Board of Agriculture was a rather more whole hearted defence of the agricultural interests of the country than was evident in the tone of the hon. Member's remarks. He certainly did not think they should, as the hon. Member suggested, see what proportion of other trades would be affected by their action before they acted. All that should be considered was how it would affect agriculture, that great industry which the Board of Agriculture was created to safeguard. The Board of Agriculture had no right to be too considerate to other trades in safeguarding the interests of the industry they were established to protect. The imputation cast upon hon. Members also by the hon. Gentleman was hardly fair. The hon. Member had suggested that one of the reasons the Board of Agriculture had to be so careful was because it was conceivable that certain people connected with the Board of Agriculture might not be actuated simply and solely with a desire for the prevention of the disease, but by some indirect and unconscious desire to get protection.

*Mr. J. A. PEASE said he had no intention of conveying that idea in connection with this matter. What he desired to convey was that great pressure was brought to bear by individuals to protect their own interests, and it was necessary to see what other interests were affected.

Colonel KENYON SLANEY said he was glad of that explanation. As to the undue kindness to other trades he would point out that with regard to removing any source of possible infection in the packing of eggs the answer of the Board of Agriculture was that the alternative method of packing would make the packages too heavy and so prevent foreign eggs from coming in. Was it right that they should hesitate to take such a step in order to protect this country from the ravages of a disease, the damage of which could only be estimated in millions, because they might inflict some slight loss on a foreign country? Then what about that mysterious cargo of which they had heard and of which the Government had lost sight? What was it, and where was it? Nobody knew where it might be or how much mischief it had introduced into the country. It did not speak well for the Board of Agriculture that they should have allowed that cargo to slip out of their notice, and go elsewhere. The hon. Member had said that a month was not too long to look around in the interests of other trades. But a month might have flooded the country with foot-and-mouth disease which might cost the nation millions; a month's looking around might be absolutely fatal to the best interests of the stockbreeders and stock keepers of the country. The action taken by the Board of Agriculture had not been quite so spirited and determined as he would have liked it to have been. Everyone recognised the difficulty of the situation, but he desired to put it on record that some Members of the House thought that in these matters the interests of agriculture ought to be supreme; that they ought not to be too tender with other interests, and that there ought to be more whole-heartedness on the part of the Board of Agriculture in their actions with regard to that industry for which they had to answer.

*MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford) said that before this Vote was passed he desired to draw attention to a matter which seriously affected his constituency, namely, the unnecessary restrictions, as he suggested, in connection with the Deptford cattle market, which kept out live cattle from Continental countries which were officially declared to be free from disease. The question had been frequently raised, but the replies of the Board of Agriculture had always been of a negative character. Only last year the President of the Board of Agriculture had visited Deptford, and was an hour witnessing the operations and conditions of that magnificent market. Yet, when the request was made that live cattle should be introduced, with the knowledge that the cattle must be slaughtered within a limited period of time, they had always received the discouraging answer that the Board could not reconsider their regulations at that moment. So far as Deptford was concerned, feeling was growing in this matter. During the last few months the various municipal bodies interested had taken up the question. It was in the interests of labour mainly that he asked the Board of Agriculture to reconsider this matter. Hundreds of thousands of pounds had been spent in the construction of the market, and in addition a considerable amount had been spent in the installation of the most up-to-date appliances for the purpose of dealing with any disease that might appear there. He had heard it stated that in the opinion of the Government inspectors it would be practically impossible for any disease, it having been detected, to leave the market, so admirable were the appliances there. There was a huge sheep market in which there had not been a sheep for months and months. The ropes were rotting, and the ironwork was rusting, and the scene was one of desolation. When one reflected what the corporation had spent in putting up machinery to deal with these very matters, it certainly seemed a strange proceeding that the Board of Agriculture should not see its way to relax its rules so far as those countries which was officially declared to be free from disease were concerned. The number of live cattle which came to this market was decreasing year by year, and contemporaneously the great American Beef Trust had come into being. In 1906, 88,886 live animals were imported into our markets. In 1907 the number was reduced to 77,139. and this year to 65,508. It seemed to him that the action of the Board was depriving hundreds and thousands of people of their livelihood, while it was depriving the whole community of Deptford and adjacent districts of fresh and cheap meat. He asked the Board of Agriculture to give the matter further consideration than they had bestowed upon it on previous occasions. He desired to call the attention of the Board of Agriculture to another matter. He would be glad if the hon. Member representing the Board that afternoon would state during the course of his reply upon the debate the Board's attitude towards the Alderney foreign animals wharf and abattoir scheme, and the delay on the part of the President of the Board in carrying out his promise, given in February of last year, to those acting for its promoters, that he would cause inquiry to be made into the reasons for the opposition shown by the officials of the Board to a project towards which he (the noble Earl) was favourably inclined. As a matter of fact, the officials of the Board of Agriculture were really opposing the scheme, and the reasons for their opposition were not quite known. If the hon. Member would be good enough to make a note, and if possible give an answer, he would be very much obliged.

MR. ABEL SMITH (Hertfordshire, Hertford) suggested to the hon. Member for Deptford that probably the present was not a very appropriate time to press on the Board of Agriculture the subject which he had brought forward, because, as they all knew, there had just been a most serious outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, and it was, therefore, a time when it was necessary to take the utmost precautions to prevent a further outbreak. In regard to the question raised by his right hon. friend the Member for Wimbledon, he did not think there was very much fault to find with the general attitude of the Board of Agriculture, or with the explanation of the hon. Gentleman. But he wanted to carry a little further the point with respect to the importation of hay and straw, because on that the answer of his hon. friend was not very satisfactory. The hon. Gentleman had rather relied on the *tu quoque* argument which had been so often used in that House, for he had remarked that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon himself, and other previous Presidents of the Board of Agriculture had not thought it necessary to restrict the importation of hay and straw, and, therefore, the present President of the Board of Agriculture could hardly be blamed for following their example. What was the fact? It was that it had been proved to the satisfaction of the expert advisers of the Board that this outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland was due to foreign hay and straw. Therefore, new circumstances had arisen, and he thought the action of the Board in regard to the matter had been a little too cautious and a little over feeble, as had been suggested by one of his hon. friends. They seemed to be so careful about other interests that those of agriculture, which they were supposed specially to represent, were thrown into the background. Whatever might have been the state of affairs in years past it was now established beyond denial that foot-and-mouth disease had been introduced through the agency of foreign hay and straw. It seemed to him to be quite easy to prevent the importation of hay and straw which was to be used for litter and fodder; but he quite admitted that the difficulty chiefly arose when they had to deal with hay and straw in which other commodities were packed. He thought, however, that it would be quite possible to devise regulations by which that difficulty could be dealt with. It was notorious that hay and straw used for packing purposes was usually sent to large working centres, and in those places regulations might be devised by which the hay and straw could be destroyed if it came from places affected by foot-and-mouth disease. Usually in municipal boroughs they had means, frequently a destructor, for destroying refuse, and this hay and straw could be dealt with in that way. That was a matter which might very well claim the consideration of the Board. He agreed with his right hon. friend that on these subjects it was absolutely necessary that the Board of Agriculture should remember that the interests of agriculture were their first concern. It was a most important industry, which they all tried to the best of their ability to represent in the House; at any rate, the Board of Agriculture was only concerned in seeing that the agriculturists of this country were properly looked after, and they were not to be too cautious or too gentle about treading on the toes of someone else who might be to a small extent indirectly affected by any action which the Department might take.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said that swine fever was the disease from which they suffered most and which caused most inconvenience in the county in which he lived. He was very glad to hear that the reports showed that on the whole the disease was diminishing compared with the state of affairs many years ago. Locally they had formed a different opinion. Many of them thought it was a disease indigenous to this country, with which our grandfathers and more distant ancestors had had to grapple, and that it was always more or less likely to break out. The local feeling had largely been that they suffered more from the restrictions than from the disease. He was glad to say that representations, addressed to the Board by deputations and otherwise, had received some attention, and that the remedies applied had been less unreasonable and onerous than they had been in past times. He heartily hoped that these conditions would not break down again, and that the Board of Agriculture would be as considerate as it could be in not exposing them to inconveniences which were not effectual in proportion to the loss and inconvenience which they caused. In regard to the tuberculin test of cattle exported to the Argentine, he thought they were greatly indebted to the hon. Member for Rye for calling attention to that matter. Farmers were inclined to be very sceptical about that test, and if the Board could do anything in connection with it to prevent the unnecessary killing of valuable pedigree stock exported to the Argentine, they should be very much indebted to it. With regard to foot-and-mouth disease, it was impossible to exaggerate the loss that would arise if it were introduced and spread in this country. Considering the many ways in which that disease could be communicated, it was wonderful we had continued free from outbreaks for so many years, and he hoped the Board would still continue to watch the matter very closely. But he was bound to say, after listening to the discussion and the reply of his hon. friend, that it appeared to him that the Board had acted in a way which was most consistent with the interests of this country as a whole, which were what they, of course, were bound to look at. His hon. friend below him had remarked that those who had preceded the present Board of Agriculture had felt chary about preventing the importation of hay and straw from foreign countries, even from countries known to be infected with the disease. We had not had outbreaks from this cause previously. And considering that only one had been caused in this way, and that had been so promptly and satisfactorily dealt with, they could hardly find fault with the Board for not having gone to greater lengths than they had done in excluding these articles of hay and straw, which were very useful to a great many owners of stock in this country, as well as being the subjects of a large trade in themselves. He thought the Board had made a reasonably good defence for any apparent tardiness they had shown, and he sincerely hoped it would be long before they were again able to trace any outbreak to the importation of those articles.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said that the hon. Member who temporarily represented the Board of Agriculture had quoted some figures with regard to swine fever which he thought they must accept as reassuring. But he would venture to suggest that, in view of the very large sums of money which the slaughter of swine cost this country, the Board should lose no opportunity of endeavouring to trace out and find some cure for this and other diseases of the kind. He was aware that something was being done in that direction, but he attached to the question of final cure a degree of importance which was not always shared to the same extent. In reference to the proposed legislation on the milk supply, he understood that the Local Government Board were rather looking to the interests of the consumers, and he hoped that the Board of Agriculture would see to the interests of the producers of milk, who, throughout the country, were perfectly convinced that legislation was necessary, and that everything that would conduce to the purity of milk should be done. So far as he had been able to observe, all the attempts to increase the purity of milk on the farms were expensive, and must necessarily be so. He quite approved of taking every precaution possible to insure cleanliness and of having veterinary inspection. But if all the precautions were carried as far as he had carried them himself the cost would be so great as to place milk out of reach of the poorer classes of the country. He stated that in order that the Board of Agriculture should limit the restrictions.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER said the President of the Local Government Board, who had the matter in hand and who was introducing a Bill had given assurances on that subject.

Mr. J. F. MASON said he was glad to hear that the matter would not be lost sight of. Everybody was agreed that agriculture in this country was not in so flourishing a condition as it was in others. In this country between the years 1875 and 1890 nearly 3,000,000 acres of land had gone out of cultivation. During that same period a corresponding amount of land had been brought under cultivation in Germany, whilst agricultural wages in that country had increased nearly 50 per cent. Agriculture in this country was overburdened, the advantages given to it by the Agricultural Rating Act had been almost entirely neutralised by the increase in the rates of the country. Something must be done to increase production. Small holdings might do something; they had their advantages, but he was not an entire believer in them. Where they were held by people who had some other occupation and who could go in for intensive cultivation, small holdings might be a success. But what was required was to endeavour to improve the yield of the land. The yield of wheat per acre in England was twice as much as that of the United States, but it did not compare with the yield per acre in France. He could not help thinking that by the study of deep cultivation and other matters the yield per acre in this country could be very largely increased. But any experiments in that direction were far beyond the powers of the small holders and should be undertaken by the Board of Agriculture. Another way in which the Board of Agriculture could do a great deal was in the direction of improving the plants grown in this country. For instance, Manitoba wheat was always worth more than English wheat in the market. Manitoba wheat grown in England had failed to retain its quality, but recently it had been crossed with great success with English wheat, with the result that there were now crossed red wheats which combined the weight of the Manitoba with a constitution which enabled them to thrive in the English climate. In the improving of seed in this way the Board of Agriculture might do a great deal of good

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College) congratulated the hon. Member on the admirable manner in which he had defended the Board of Agriculture, and the Department itself on the way it had tackled the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Edinburgh. He did not agree with hon. Gentlemen opposite who thought that in matters of this sort agriculture should be considered supreme. In his opinion it was absolutely incumbent on the Board of Agriculture to consider the interests of the various trades affected before they issued any orders whatever. But the question he rose especially to speak on was that alluded to by the hon. Member for Deptford, namely, the importation of Canadian cattle into this country. It seemed to him that before this Government came into power the Party was pledged to remove the embargo on Canadian cattle, and their action in keeping the embargo on during the two and a half years they had been in power was inconsistent with the pledge they gave when wooing the electors. It was the only inconsistency of which they could be accused, and he hoped they would take the earliest opportunity of removing that blot from their escutcheon. It certainly seemed inconsistent that a Government which was so in love with free trade should prevent the importation of animals from our Colonies which were certified as being free from disease, but it was more inconsistent still that hon. Gentlemen opposite should preclude these cattle, because their contention was that a preference should be given to the Colonies. In this particular case they, however, advocated that Canada should be handicapped.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question of the importation of Canadian cattle requires legislation, and therefore cannot be discussed upon this Estimate.

MR. WATT said that perhaps it was just as well that the point of order had come exactly at the termination of his observations.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York) said he agreed with the hon. Member who had just sat down that the Party in power before the general election were committed to the free importation of Canadian cattle and that the Government when wooing the country shared that view. But courtship was quite a different matter from matrimony, and hon. and right hon. Gentlemen were now wedded to the Treasury Bench and things that were said lightly and rashly in the days of their wooing were now forgotten or had a very different significance. So far as the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease was concerned, the Board of Agriculture had come through that more by good luck than good judgment. He could not admit that they had taken even reasonable precautions. They were warned distinctly and in terms by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, that Holland was infected with foot-and-mouth disease and that it was dangerous to import hay from that country. Of that warning they took no notice whatever; they took their chance and trusted to luck for months. He quite agreed that when the outbreak actually occurred, all precautions were taken, but the mischief was then done. The pecuniary damage suffered already amounted to £4,000. He would remind the Committee that they were not yet out of danger, and the amount might any day become not £4,000 but £400,000, or even £4,000,000. When the Central Chamber of Agriculture first warned the Board of Agriculture if they had then put a stopper on the importation of foreign hay and straw, all this danger and trouble would have been avoided. The hon. Member representing the Board of Agriculture had used the *tu quoque* argument, but it did not overcome the danger to say that his predecessor or predecessors had run the risk before. He was not so sure that the *tu quoque* argument held good, because the importation of hay and straw was quite a matter of modern commerce. For a long time the difficulty was one of bulk, but he understood that that had been got over recently, by comprising hay and straw for importation. The matter had not been dealt with that vigilance which they had a right to expect from a Government Department. He was sorry to hear the hon. Member, representing the Government, imply that other trades must not be interfered with for the sake of agriculture. The hon. Member seemed to forget that agriculture was no longer the Cinderella to be kicked and cuffed about. They had now got a Small Holdings Act and agriculture was not going to be the Cinderella any more. It was the duty of the Department to watch agriculture and do everything in their power to see that that great industry was safeguarded. With regard to the question of the importation of hay and straw in packing cases there was great danger from its being distributed and so carrying infection. He did not think that on a matter so vital as this, the Board of Agriculture ought to make up its mind without further consideration, and say once and for all that it would do nothing to stop the hay and straw which came into this country in packing cases in any circumstances. That was a matter which had to be looked at all round from different points of view. They wanted some further explanation of the cargo of hay which was refused at Dublin, and after it had been tossed about on the high seas was landed somewhere. Had it been landed in this country? They had not yet been able to trace all the infected hay which came over from Holland in the first instance, and only part of it had been accounted for. When the advisers of the Department told them that the danger was passed, how did they know that that statement was well founded? In future he hoped the Board of Agriculture would think over the matter many times before they came to the conclusion that in the matter of the importation of hay, straw, and fodder from abroad much greater care ought not to be taken than had been taken in the past, if the flocks and herds of this country were to be properly safeguarded.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said there were one or two matters to which he would like to call attention. He was delighted to see the great anxiety which was being displayed on the Opposition Benches on this subject, for it might develop into enthusiasm, and then they would probably get something done. One hon. Member had said that the Agricultural Rating Act had done nothing for agriculture. If anything had been relieved of taxation by that Act it certainly was the land, and that was not fair to the industrial workers. The town he had the honour to represent under that Act had to pay something over £7,000 per annum, and to say that under those circumstances agriculture wanted further consideration along those lines was asking too much. Any one who studied the history of the land from the 16th century to the present time would find that the claim of the landholder had always been "Give, give, give," and they had certainly got the biggest share. The grievance was private ownership, and something would have to be done in that direction. So far as the development of agriculture was concerned, protection was no remedy. Last year he raised the question of the low rate of wages paid to a number of employees under the Board of Agriculture, which he thought was about the worst of all the State Departments in regard to the wages paid to its employees. He said then that if nothing was done in regard to the particular case he raised he should bring the matter up on every opportunity, and he now proposed to bring the matter forward again. On the last occasion one hon. Member rather hinted that he had slighted Kew, but he had just as great an admiration for Kew as any other hon. Member of this House, and it was because of his great admiration for the work done there, and the pleasure it afforded to the people of this country, that he rose to again protest against the manner in which they were treating the employees at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

SIR F. BANBURY: Is the hon. Member in order in raising that question upon this Vote?

*THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; Kew Gardens is on the Board of Agriculture Vote, and it is in order.

*MR. SUMMERBELL said there were fifty men employed at Kew who were receiving the miserable wage of 21s. a week, and the Department were allowing that to go on from year to year. Before any of those men could be employed at Kew they had to satisfy the Board of Agriculture that they had served five years in a first-class nursery or garden. They insisted upon having only skilful men and then they paid them the low wage of 21s. per week, out of which they had to provide a serge suit and look quite respectable. Considering the skilled work these men were called upon to perform it was a scandal to continue paying them such a miserable wage. It had always been said that there were great opportunities for these men getting good situations elsewhere after working at Kew. There were at present ten men under notice at Kew, and the Board of Agriculture had kindly conceded the right to these men to be kept there until they got other employment. He knew one of the best men who left Kew Gardens and went to Canada, where he was now doing the work of a labourer. The argument, therefore, that these men could get higher positions was unfair and incorrect It was said that lectures were given to these men free of charge. He had inquired as to how far the men availed themselves of the lectures, and he found that the number was one, and he thought the Government should not waste the £1 per lecture which they spent for these lectures. The labourers at Kew received 24s. a week, while the highly skilled men to whose case he had called attention received 21s. a week. It was said that the cost of living in the district was not high for a single man, but he did not think anyone who occupied respectable lodgings and paid a very moderate sum for living, would be able to save much for the proverbial rainy day. He hoped the Department would be able to put the gardeners on a level at least with the labourers in the matter of pay. He also called attention to the pay of 19s. 6d. including allowances a week given to the chainmen. That was a very small wage, and he believed that it was against the spirit of the fair wage resolution carried unanimously in this House in 1893.

SIR F. BANBURY said it appeared to him that the Board of Agriculture was not as expeditious as it might have been in preventing the extension of foot-and-mouth disease. The hon. Member representing the Board had stated that the department took a month to stop the importation of hay and straw from foreign countries because sixty bales had been sent to Leith for the forage of horses and that the horses had not contracted the disease. The hon. Gentleman was technically right in stating that horses could contract the disease, but according to returns which he had seen in the library extending over the fourteen years from 1887 to 1900 there had been 300,000 cattle and 400,000 sheep inflicted with foot-and-mouth disease. In nine of these years no other animals were infected except cattle, sheep and swine, and in the five other years only eighty-four other animals were infected. The report of the Board of Agriculture dealing with foot-and-mouth disease only alluded to sheep, cattle, and swine. It was evident that the disease very rarely attacked horses, and, therefore, the excuse of the Board of Agriculture that they did not stop the importation of hay from the infected country because these particular horses were not infected was not a very good one. The hon. Member for Deptford was very eloquent about the closing of the Deptford market. He hoped the Board of Agriculture would not listen to the hon. Member, because, after all, his view was an extremely selfish one. Rather than that a few people should suffer a certain amount of disadvantage the hon. Member's view was that the whole of the agricultural community of the country should take the risk of heavy loss from disease in their flocks and herds. The hon. Member had stated that the people in the port of London were deprived of cheap meat. He could not see how the hon. Member could make that statement. There was nothing to prevent cattle being slaughtered at foreign ports and brought in in carcases. His right hon. friend had said that foreign meat was always cheaper than home fed meat, and therefore the argument that people were deprived of cheap food fell to the ground.

*MR. BOWERMAN said it was perfectly true that the people of Deptford were getting cheap frozen meat, but they were not getting what they used to get—cheap fresh-killed meat.

SIR F. BANBURY said that if live cattle were knocked about on the voyage they suffered in condition. If cattle experienced rough weather on board ship the meat was nothing like so good as if the animals were killed in their own country and sent here either frozen or in a cooled chamber. He hoped the Board of Agriculture would remain firm. The hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow had said that the action of the Government in regard to the importation of Canadian cattle was the only matter on which they had been inconsistent. The hon. Member must have had his eyes and ears closed, otherwise he would have found more examples of the Government's inconsistency. He was glad that for the moment foot-and-mouth disease had been stamped out. He hoped that if it should again break out the Board would take steps to stop without delay the importation of anything which might introduce the disease from foreign countries.

*SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.) said it appeared to him that hardly sufficient attention had been given to the scientific side of this question. They were apt to apply the same rough and ready method of treatment to different diseases without due regard to the differences in the pathology of the diseases. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon had justly referred to the great work of Professor Brown. He recognised the value of the stamping out method as applied to cattle plague, pleuro-pneumonia, and foot-and mouth disease. In the case of swine fever, he was not sure that the method was applicable in the same way. He hoped the hon. Gentleman representing the Board would institute an inquiry into the pathology of swine fever in order to ascertain whether it lent itself to stamping out in the same way as cattle plague, pleuro-pneumonia, and foot-and-mouth disease. Possibly the long incubation period rendered it more difficult to deal with than in the case of other diseases. In regard to foot-and-mouth disease he would remind the Committee that there was not there, as we were assured there was in the case of other diseases, such as anthrax, tubercle, and glanders, the means of diagnosis by a definite micro-organism. The hon. Member for South Somerset had stated that the Board of Agriculture recognised that there was no micro-organism which could be identified as the cause of foot-and-mouth disease and isolated. They were left to diagnose by clinical symptoms and were not able to derive from infected animals or from fodder any particular organism which might be traced with precision as the cause of the disease, as was said to be the case in anthrax, glanders, and tubercule. It was easy to speak in a glib fashion of an infected country, and to proscribe the importation of hay or straw from a whole country. whereas in all probability only a particular district of that country was infected. A more complete and satisfactory method would be an international system of notification of diseases and of the exact part of the country from which the disease was likely to be distributed by infection, and not by the rather rough and ready method of proscribing a whole country which might not be wholly infected. He urged his hon. friend to consider the propriety of instituting a more scientific inquiry into the causes of these diseases on which science had not yet said the last word, especially in relation to those diseases where organisms of transmission have not been discovered. Enormous sums of money had been spent on attempts to stamp out swine fever without the same satisfactory results as in the case of cattle-plague, pleuro-pneumonia, and foot-and-mouth disease. Swine fever did not from its very nature lend itself to the same kind of treatment as those other diseases.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: The hon. Member for Lichfield and two or three other Members have endeavoured to impress on me the importance of extending the regulations issued by the Board of Agriculture to other hay and straw not used for fodder or litter. I have endeavoured to point out that the Board in coming to their decision were wise not to extend the order in that direction. When bales are introduced as cargo into this country, they are frequently compressed, and it is quite possible that the hay may contain germs of such disease as foot-and-mouth; but when hay and straw which are used for packing are introduced, as a rule they are not pressed. When not pressed the hay and straw are nearly always subject to both light and air, and I am informed by experts that light and air are both fatal to the preservation of the virus which produces the infection. That being so, there is even very much less risk of hay and straw containing any infection when they are used as packing material than compressed hay and straw which may be used for fodder and litter, and which come in direct contact with cattle in this country. The Committee must realise what an enormous expense the country would be put to if an army of inspectors were to follow up all the hay and straw used for packing, to see that the packing was done with care, and that the whole of the material was destroyed. The hon. Member for Newport asked me a few questions as to rat-catching. I cannot follow him into that. The very able officials of the Board of Agriculture, who deserve the highest credit for the way in which they have stamped out this outbreak of foot-and mouth disease, inform me that they employed two expert rat-catchers, and they had worked unremittingly to exterminate these animals. As to the question whether the Board were or were not to blame in regard to the month's delay in issuing the Order, I can only repeat that they thought it was absolutely essential in the interests of the whole country that "panicy" action should not be taken; and that they had followed during the few months they had been in office the policy pursued by former Presidents of the Board of Agriculture after this matter had been fairly weighed by them, and on the best expert opinion which they could obtain. All former Presidents of the Board of Agriculture had come to the conclusion that the expense would be out of proportion to the risk run, and that it was advisable when the risk was theoretical that there should not be any departure from the existing policy. That was the view taken by the present President of the Board of Agriculture, and if they did not act on the spur of the moment in the way they did in the Irish case, it was because the matter was not nearly so prejudicial to other trading interests in Ireland as it would have been in this country. [AN HON. MEMBER on the Irish Benches: No.] I understand that comparatively little hay and straw are imported into Ireland, and that a considerable quantity has been imported for years into this country, and having regard to that fact the Board decided that they should not act precipitately in this matter. I must say that the Board of Agriculture so fully recognise that their first concern is the interest of agriculture, and it was only after mature reflection and after the lapse of two or three weeks, and having done their best to avert any chance of foot-and-mouth disease coming into the country by means of hay and straw, that they issued this Order. I, therefore, think that all credit is due to them. The hon. Member for Windsor alluded to the necessity of improving the plants grown in this country and suggested the introduction of a cross between Manitoba wheat and English wheat. The hon. Member likewise alluded to experiments which Mr. Biffen of Cambridge has made, and suggested that the Board of Agriculture should follow up those experiments. The Board have considered this matter and they have a very high opinion of Mr. Biffen and of the value of his experiments. It is hoped that next year they may be able to give a grant in order to help these experiments in which that gentleman has taken such a great interest. The sum of money at the disposal of the Board is not very large, and I cannot hold out a hope that the grant will be a very large one, although it will be an earnest of the interest which the Board of Agriculture take in this matter. The hon. Member for Cheshire might have been called to order as the hon. Member for Deptford was in regard to the introduction of cattle to be slaughtered at the port of landing. The Board of Agriculture have no alternative but to keep out the cattle which the hon. Member desires to introduce. Cattle from countries where disease exists cannot be introduced even for the purpose of being slaughtered at Deptford. An hon. Member asked what was the objection of the Board of Agriculture to the erection of a sort of abattoir in the Island of Alderney where the cattle might be slaughtered. The islands of Alderney, Guernsey, and Sark, are in exactly the same position and regarded in the same light as any other port in the United Kingdom; and it is on that ground that no special permission can be given to these islands to introduce cattle from infected countries for slaughter there. An hon. Member raised the question of the pay of the gardeners at Kew, and he made a very plausible case for an increase of pay to the men employed in the gardens at Kew. I had never heard of the case before, and I was somewhat impressed by it, though I thought there must be a good answer to it. And so there is. From the information given to me the average ages of the gardeners at Kew Gardens are from 19 to 30. It is true that they must have four years gardening experience; that they must be men of ability, of a certain age, and must be unmarried. But these men come to Kew Gardens under special contract. They obtain an education and special facilities which they cannot obtain elsewhere. Kew Gardens are the most popular in the gardening world, and there are always many applications for the forty-nine or fifty posts there. The young men may attend classes and courses of lectures, and in future they will be obliged to attend them as part of their training curriculum. They have opportunities for rising to be sub-foremen, and foremen, when they can be retained in the employment for other two years or six in all. It is really unfair that these men should protest through the hon. Member against the terms of their contract. It is quite natural that when they secure a position of this kind they should desire that it should be permanent, but when the Government are spending something like £22,000 a year in maintaining perhaps the best Botanical Gardens in the world, it is only right that the advantages derived from being employed in them should be given to the many rather than the few. It is on the ground that we do not desire to retain these men longer than two years in the Gardens, and because we desire others to come in and reap the same advantages that the pay of these men has been limited to 21s. a week. This matter was fully gone into last year when the Board placed the whole of the facts before the Treasury. The Treasury, on that occasion, came to the conclusion that no case had been made out for an increase in the subsistence money, but pointed out that these men having been employed at Kew was in itself a strong recommendation, and enabled them to obtain posts in large gardens, not only in this country but all over the Empire. I take no exception whatsoever to the action of the hon. Member in placing these claims before the Committee and in presenting the case of these men in the best way possible, but I can hold out no hopes that their position will be improved.

MR. CHAPLIN: If I may presume to say so, the hon. Member in replying on this debate had no need to appeal for the indulgence of the House, for he has performed a task which must have been very difficult with very great ability. I now desire to detain the Committee only for a few moments for the purpose of showing why I think it is desirable to take the sense of the Committee upon the Motion I have moved. We have had one admission of great value this afternoon. It has been placed beyond all doubt by the statement of the hon. Member, that the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Edinburgh was entirely due to infected fodder, which had been brought from abroad; to infected fodder which was landed in this country in November last. That bore out to the letter what I pointed out in my earlier observations, namely, the length of time for which disease will often lie dormant. That fodder was not what the hon. Member called "opened up" until 29th January, and within a week it had communicated this fell disease to our cattle. The hon. Member in answer to the request I made him to account for the long delay which took place before issuing the Order, based his reply on two points. The first was the practice of myself and others under similar circumstances in the year 1885, the other was that a good many people who had been making this demand were themselves, no doubt unconsciously, animated, by a desire for protection. Some of us were. I frankly admit it. But what kind of protection was it we were asking for in this case? We were asking for protection from the importation of foreign disease into the many flocks and herds of this country. I should have thought that that was a kind of protection in which even the most fanatical free trader that ever existed would have been willing to concur. For my own part I wish to go to the hon. Member's other ground, and absolutely and entirely to repudiate his allegation as to my practice and the practice of colleagues of mine being similar to that adopted by the Board of Agriculture in this case. Quite recently I elicited from the hon. Member, by an interjection across the Table, the fact that he was not able to state that hay and fodder was imported into this country in 1885 in the same way as it is imported now. He was not able to dispute my earlier observation that the importation of hay and straw as fodder into this country on a large scale was only a trade of modern origin. The hon. Member was reduced to this statement: "Oh, but it might be packing straw, and with regard to the case of packing straw that was the course adopted by yourself and others." Well, I cannot remember what happened twenty-three years ago with regard to packing straw. I asked some question about it the other day across the Table, because I was then informed of the case which has been referred to by the hon. Member for Rye this afternoon—that there was an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease which might naturally and truly be attributed to that cause, and therefore the allegation of the hon. Member opposite that in this case the Board of Agriculture followed the practice of myself in 1885 is unfounded.

MR. J. A. PEASE (interrupting): The case quoted by the hon. Member for Rye occurred in 1885.

MR. CHAPLIN: Then if that is so, it related solely to packing straw which is not the question in dispute at this moment. In regard to this matter, all that we have demanded on this side of the House has been that in cases of this kind, where it is known that fodder is being imported from districts which notoriously are infected with foot-and-mouth disease, the importation of such fodder should be prohibited. The hon. Gentleman, who adopted an argument used by others, showed immense anxiety that a trade amounting to £380,000 a year should not be interfered with unnecessarily. But I submit that the Board of Agriculture is to look after the agriculture of this country and not after foreign trade. What would have been the result if this disease had spread throughout the country, because of the disinclination of the Board of Agriculture to issue orders lest this trade with fodder amounting to £380,000 should be interfered with? I was talking to a farmer on this very subject only the other day, and he very truly said that it would have cost us that amount in the very first week of the outbreak. Millions are at stake in this matter, and I desire to express my strong opinion that the argument of the hon. Member is not entitled to that weight which he thinks it ought to have with this Committee. I quite agree with the hon. Member that we ought not to have panic action, but I do not think it would be panic action to take precaution against an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease by absolutely preventing fodder from an infected district being brought into this country. The thing which, in the course of this debate, has disappointed me more than anything else, is the total absence of any reply to the questions I put earlier in the day and the suggestions which I made. I asked whether the Board of Agriculture had any idea how many other importations of fodder there had been since November which were still lying not opened up, but which, when they were opened up, might be the means of another outbreak; and I suggested to the hon. Gentleman that it was deserving of being put seriously before the Board of Agriculture as to whether it would not be possible even now to ascertain the number of cargoes of hay and straw which have been allowed to be landed in this country since, so that they might do their best to trace them. I regard this as a very serious matter, and deserving of very serious attention even now, if it is not too late. Knowing what has occurred, knowing what I did not know until this afternoon, namely, that the particular importation of hay responsible for the outbreak of this disease has been in this country since November last, I am myself honestly apprehensive that there may be hundreds of cargoes which have been landed since then which must add seriously to the danger of the situation at the present time. Under all these circumstances and in the absence of any reply to the questions which I have put on this point, and in the absence of any action on the part of the Board of Agriculture, I feel bound to take the sense of the Committee upon this matter.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) expressed great surprise that in a matter so much affecting Ireland, so vital to Ireland as this was, the Nationalist Members were either absent or entirely silent. He had been waiting to hear the views of hon. Members below the gangway upon this question. The Government had been goaded into action by the right hon. Member for Wimbledon and others, but he felt that the Government must be pressed still further upon the point. Reference had been made again and again to the hay and straw trade, and the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote had spoken of that trade, which amounted to some £350,000 a year, as if it were an enormous sum, but it was nothing compared to the risk that was run by the flocks and herds of this country. It was ridiculous to mention that trade as one requiring special protection. He rose, however, particularly to protest on behalf of Ireland.

*THE CHAIRMAN: How does this apply to Ireland? This Vote has nothing to do with Ireland.

MR. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS (Carmarthen District) called attention to the question of Sunday labour in the parks and gardens. He pointed out that in the previous year he drew attention to this subject, and the Commissioner of Works had been good enough then to take the matter in hand and had given some relief to certain of the men who had been engaged for nine years without even having a Sunday off. He would like to know whether anything further had been done in the matter.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) asked whether the War Office or the Board of Agriculture had received any resolution from the Agricultural Board of South Kildare, with regard to the importation of hay and straw to the Curragh and other camps of Ireland.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he was informed that the question of the importation of hay and straw into Ireland did not come within this Vote. The Board of Agriculture in this country had nothing to do with Ireland.

*COLONEL WALKER (Lancashire, Widnes) called attention to the prevalence of glanders and farcy in horses, especially in London, and to the fact that there was no appreciable diminution in the number of horses affected with the disease. Some 2,000 horses a year were contaminated, and as recent inquests in London and Edinburgh showed, the disease was contagious to human beings. There were only three inspectors for the whole of London. Instead of leaving that vast area in the care of three men, power ought to be given to the numerous army of veterinary surgeons to report cases of glanders just as medical men had the duty of reporting outbreaks of infectious diseases amongst people. In the case of glanders and farcy there was no power to compel the owner's veterinary surgeon to report the diseases to the central authority, nor did he obtain any reward for so doing. When a case was discovered a policeman was sent for, who sent for the inspector, who dealt with the case, but even he was not allowed to apply the Mallein test, which was the best test known, to the other horses in the stable, without the consent of the owner of the horses. There was also considerable delay in getting the horse affected away, and even if it was removed at once it had to be taken through the streets with the risk of contaminating others. It was most important that the horse affected should be destroyed directly the disease was discovered. He hoped this matter would be taken up quickly, and the disease stamped out.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.) said he rose to protest against the action of the Board of Agriculture in allowing hay and straw to be used for packing articles coming from those countries where foot-and-mouth disease existed. It was a most dangerous thing, and if this disease happened to be imported into Ireland in this way it would mean ruin to many of the farmers there, who would not be able to pay their land purchase annuities.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he thought this Vote did not apply to Ireland. So far as this matter concerned Ireland he understood its conduct was in the hands of another Department.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I am well aware of that.

Colonel Walker.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member can only discuss items in the Vote the reduction of which has been moved. What the hon. Member desires to discuss is relevant to another Vote which we have not reached.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY said he protested against hay and straw coming into this country without active and keen oversight being exercised on the part of the Board of Agriculture. If it brought foot-and-mouth disease with it, the shipping trade for store cattle between Ireland and England would be stopped, with the result that the farmers of Ireland would not be able to sell their store cattle. He also protested against the Board of Agriculture approving of the name "Peark's Own" being applied to an article of milk-blended butter. The Board of Agriculture held the view that it was not sold as butter, but he contended that any person going into a shop, and seeing the article, would come to the conclusion that it was butter and would not know that it was a blend of milk and butter containing eight per cent. more of water than pure butter. He saw no reason why this firm should be specially favoured, and it seemed to him that there was something behind the scenes. He put this matter seriously before the Board of Agriculture, because all they wanted was fair play all round. They ought not to approve of the name given to this commodity any longer, and they should do nothing which would lead the public to believe that they were buying butter, when they were buying some other article which was not butter, thus doing injury to the very large dairy industry.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said he observed that his hon. friend had raised the question of glanders. It was one which deserved consideration, and its importance should be impressed upon the Treasury, who had not dealt with it in the manner in which it ought to have done. Only a very short time ago an opportunity was afforded of dealing with this disease. London was one of its centres, but when the electric trams came into operation a great number of horses which had been used in the city were sent into the country and the disease was thus spread. His hon. friend had suggested that with the help of the Treasury they might pay proper compensation, and he believed it was a disease which in that way might have been very adequately dealt with; but, of course, when they allowed it to spread to different parts of the country it became much more difficult to deal with. He hoped the Board, in view of the information which they had in the Reports of Committees and other evidence that the disease was dangerous not only to animals but also to human beings, would really take the matter very seriously in hand. Another subject which he wished to bring before the hon. Gentleman's notice had reference to the action of the Board of Agriculture in regard to the Act of last year dealing with the destruction of insect pests. He did not think their conduct in administering that Act had been such as to give confidence to those interested, and there was no doubt that their reluctance to act promptly had resulted in the introduction of gooseberry mildew into this country. The Board also ought to have been more prompt in their action in reference to a new disease, called black scab, affecting potatoes. He believed very little had been done by the Board in that matter. At the present time it was known fairly well where the parts affected were, and it was known very well how that disease could be checked. He considered it most important that the Board should have taken more prompt action in order to prevent the spread of the disease by not allowing seed potatoes to be sown in districts where the disease existed. At present there was no means of discovering where the disease was. The seed potatoes had been sown broad-cast over the country, and there was no security for those who were growing potatoes that they would not be affected by this particular disease. He was convinced that the Board had power to deal with these matters, and that they should do more than they had been doing to check these diseases. With reference to gooseberry mildew, the Board had at first issued a strong Order for the destruction of the fruit bushes affected, but owing to the unfortunate fact that no provision was made for compensation by the Exchequer, they found, he presumed, difficulties about the carrying out of this compulsory Order, with the result that it was revoked, and there was now an Order in force only giving the alternative to spray and prune instead of destroying the bushes. According to the authorities and those who had studied this question, spraying and pruning was in no way a satisfactory means of checking the disease. It had not proved so in Worcestershire and other parts which had before suffered from the invasion of this disease. In Kent, up to the present, they had escaped it, but as gooseberry growing was an extremely important branch in the county, they were very anxious about it. If there should be an outbreak in Kent, apparently they had no power now, even though the county council might be willing, to pay the expense of ordering the destruction of the bushes; and the Order for the spraying and pruning, in the opinion of the Kent growers at all events, was not at all satisfactory. He thought, indeed, that the administration of the Act had been unscientific and dilatory, and that the Board had not realised the importance of the matter to these smaller industries. He sincerely hoped that the Board would take the question more seriously in hand than in the past, and that, with reference to new diseases which come to this country, far more prompt steps would be taken to check them, and so prevent their getting into our midst, when it was very difficult to eradicate them. He asked whether the Board of Agriculture could issue through their journal, or in some other way, a statement of the actual districts in which these diseases existed. At present there was no means of knowing where the disease existed except where, in certain counties, the disease had been proved to exist. If it were known which were the affected districts the people would know where to obtain their new stocks, but at present there was very great insecurity in that respect. He hoped that in some way a return would be made so that everybody would be able to tell where the disease existed, and by that means some security would be afforded against the spread of infection. He believed that the disease of swine fever had already been dealt with, but he trusted as regarded other diseases which had been alluded to there might be more definite action taken.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.) desired to emphasise the two points brought forward by his hon. friend the Member for Limerick. Indirectly, Ireland would be affected by this question of the importation of hay and straw from infected countries. Foot-and-mouth disease spread insidiously and rapidly, and could only be put down with great expense. It should be prevented from coming into this country, for so surely as it was introduced here it would reach Ireland, whose markets would be closed. The hon. Gentleman representing the Department had discharged his duty with a great deal of ability and a great deal of tact, but he would ask him to press upon the heads of the Department the necessity for more caution as regarded the introduction of disease. The other point to which attention had been drawn was connected with butter. Anyone who knew anything about the manufacture of this article and margarine would recognise that tons upon tons of milk-blended butter and margarine were weekly palmed off on the people of this country under the name of butter. It was not only a fraud on the people who made genuine butter, but a fraud on the consumers, who were imposed upon in a most glaring and evil way, and he certainly thought the Board of Agriculture had been remiss in this matter, and had allowed the firm to which special attention had been drawn a privilege which enabled them to violate the Act of last year, which they had hoped would do something to prevent this illicit trade.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: I may be permitted to reply to the points which have been raised. With regard to glanders, it is, of course, a very serious disease, and is regarded so by the Board of Agriculture, but I am glad to say there has been a steady diminution during the last few years. In 1904 there were 1,529 outbreaks, in 1905 there were 1,214, in 1906 1,066, and last year 854. That was the lowest year we have had for eight years. With regard to the number of horses affected, last year was the lowest for the last six years. The figures are as follows:—1904, 2,658; 1905, 2,068; 1906, 2,012; and last year 1,921; so that not only have the outbreaks been fewer, but fewer horses have been attacked. It is, however, sufficiently serious to justify the attention which has been given to it, and I am grateful to the hon. Member for alluding to it, because the more attention is drawn to a disease of this kind the more likely people are to take trouble to stamp it out, and to take the necessary steps to get rid of it. Perhaps hon. Members are not aware that the new Order in connection with glanders was issued on 1st January this year to local authorities. It deals chiefly with two points—increasing the power of local authorities to apply tests and obliging them to slaughter animals affected. I am told the London County Council administration has on the whole been very satisfactory. They are the local authority having the control of the horses affected, which seems to be the most serious charge brought by the hon. Member, and I think anything he has to say in regard to the dangers of horses suffering from glanders being taken through the streets ought to be addressed to that authority, although it is perfectly right that the Board of Agriculture should be made acquainted with any cases of that kind as well. With regard to the question of the advertisement of "Pearksown" as a substitute for butter, it is within the four corners of the law. The Board of Agriculture has no power to interfere with the advertisement, as I understand it. They have allowed it to be registered just in the same way that they allow a large number of other names to be registered, but none of them include the word butter, and as the word butter is excluded from their nomenclature there is no reason for the Board of Agriculture to step in. Whilst some of these individuals may be ingenious in their advertisements, so long as they keep within the four corners of the law the Board of Agriculture has no administrative power to interfere.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Will the Board of Agriculture approve of this firm selling this article in their shops as "Pearksown" and thus lead the public to believe that they are buying butter?

MR. J. A. PEASE: So long as the articles are properly described the public will buy the article at their own risk. "Pearksown" does not indicate to the public that this article is butter, and at any rate the same is not allowed to be associated with butter, and the public asking for butter cannot be given this article as butter. With regard to another point raised by the hon. Member for Ashford, who complained that the Board of Agriculture had not taken sufficiently prompt steps to deal with gooseberry mildew, the Board have from time to time taken definite action. A leaflet has been issued which deals in a very comprehensive way with all the steps which must be taken to exterminate this disease, and to get rid of it whenever it is found, and an Order was issued quite recently on 10th December, in which districts affected are scheduled, and all the names of the places where the disease has occurred are included in the scheduled areas. I do not know if the hon. Member desires further information in regard to the exact places, but they are given with some detail, and I think probably steps have been taken sufficient to get rid of this pest.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: Supposing the disease were to break out in Kent, would the Board be willing to issue an Order giving Kent power to destroy bushes?

MR. J. A. PEASE: Under the Order which has been issued I understand it could be easily extended to new districts where outbreaks have occurred. Clause 5, Sub-section 2 says "no bush shall be removed from any plantation, garden, or field in which there is a bush which is diseased or suspected of being diseased and clippings from diseased or suspected bushes shall be forthwith destroyed by burning or other effective methods." In that way it is held the disease can be stamped out if the other recommendations in the Order are vigilantly followed. I am glad to say that at the present time the disease has not broken out in Kent, and it is hoped that with the publicity which has been given to the subject all those who have gooseberry bushes under their care will take every precaution to prevent the disease spreading if it does break out. The hon. Member asked me a question with regard to black scab. There are several other pests which affect this country. Under the powers given by the Act of last year it is proposed to issue very shortly regulations which will include this particular disease. I hope it will not be many days before that is issued.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said he would not have risen but for the unsatisfactory answer which had been given to an hon. Member on the Irish benches on the subject of milk-blended butter. He would like to call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that they had been distinctly told, both in Committee and in the House, that the Board of Agriculture would not sanction any name which did not make it clear to the buyer that the article was not butter. Nobody could say that the word "Pearksown" conveyed the impression that it was not butter or not soap or not cheese, or not anything else. Nobody could tell what "Pearksown" might be, but the supposition was, as Pearks was a large butter dealer, that "Pearksown" would be considered to be butter. It absolutely violated the promises which were given them that no name would be sanctioned which did not make it perfectly clear that this was not butter, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would do what he could to prevent at any rate in the future, names such as those which obviously misled the public, being registered.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER asked if he might correct the statement which had just been made. He had sat on the Committee and had followed the subject all through with great care. He thought the pledge given was that the name should in no way convey that it was butter. It was impossible to give a name which proved that it was not butter. The pledge was given and he thought carried out that the name should in no way convey to the purchaser that it was butter, and though it was quite true that by using the name of the firm over a substance that looked like butter the public might be led to consider it butter, he did not know that the Board of Agriculture could do anything once they had sanctioned the name.

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said he would refer the hon. Gentleman to the words of the Act of last year. Clause 9, sub-section 3, said that if any person dealt with, sold or offered for sale any article suggestive of butter or anything connected with the dairy interest he should be liable to very severe penalties. If he rightly understood the complaint of his hon. friend below the gangway it was not only that the Board had licensed the name "Pearksown" along with some other eighteen names, but that it had taken no action in reference to advertisements which had appeared in all the leading newspapers of the country, by this firm and which read as follows, "'Pearksown' is a mixture of butter and milk, an absolutely pure wholesome food and better than the best butter.'" Again he referred to the wording of the statute to the effect that a trader was not to offer for sale substances of this kind by a description which was suggestive of butter or anything connected with the dairy industry. He had put several questions to the hon. Baronet the Member for South Somerset on the subject and it might be a mere coincidence, or that somewhat late in the day the Board of Agriculture had taken some indirect action, but these advertisements had disappeared from the newspapers within the last few days. He had handed a copy of the advertisement to the hon. Baronet, who confessed that he had never seen it, but whatever might have been the reason these advertisements had dropped. He could only express his regret that those who had opposed the legalising of this middle article did not succeed in their opposition, because it had become increasingly recognised that in licensing the sale of an article which was not margarine, which was most likely to be described as butter, and which was not butter, they had given those who were inclined to act dishonestly to the public a very great privilege which they were using freely to the detriment of the public interest.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 87; Noes, 207. (Division List No. 42.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Delany, William
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.

Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duffy, William J.
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Ffrench, Peter
Fletcher, J. S.
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Halpin, J.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hogan, Michael
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hon. Col. H.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meagher, Michael

Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Power, Patrick Joseph
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Starkey, John R.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)

Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.

Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brodie, H. C.

Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton, Rt.Hn.SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crossley, William J.
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar,Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Elibank, Master of
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon,Rt Hn.SirW.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M.(Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Hope,W.Bateman(Somerset,N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy(Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Col.Ivor(S'thampton
Philipps,J.Wynford (Pembroke
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walton, Joseph
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E. (Clackmann'n
Wason,John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question again proposed.

*SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg) moved the reduction of the Vote by £100 in order to call attention to an important point in the working of the Small Holdings (England) Act. The point arose from the fact that a certain landlord in North Lincolnshire had a short time ago—in December last—two farms thrown on his hands owing to the sudden death of the tenant who had been farming the two put into one. The landlord decided upon keeping one and letting it to a tenant, the other he offered to the Lindsey County Council for the purpose of the creation of small holdings under the Act of 1907. The rent of the farm as two farms was 21s. per acre, rising in two years to 23s. per acre. The farm consisted of three separate sets of buildings recently renovated and a house. The first official offer was made to the council on 23rd January and a sub-committee of the council on small holdings visited the farm and reported favourably upon it, both as regards the suitability of the land and the price asked. The size of the farm being 240 acres, the landlord was asked to take back forty, making a round 200 acres, and at a meeting held at Lincoln on 19th February, at which Mr. Talbot Baines, the Commissioner of the Board of Agriculture was present, the following took place—

> "The whole matter was fully gone into and report was read of the Visiting Inspection Committee of their visit and recommendations as to how the existing buildings could be utilised and the land suitably sub-divided. Details as to the rent and interest to be charged tenants were fully gone into and the advance and opinion of the Commissioners withheld thereon. It was ultimately decided that it would be necessary to charge the tenants an additional rent, viz., (1) 5*s.* 9*d.* or 6*s.* for prepayment of interest and sinking fund on expenses incurred with respect to house and buildings, and (2) 3*s.* for repairs, management, collection, &c., making rent proposed as follows—Rent to landlord 20*s.*; interest, &c., on buildings 6*s.*; management, repairs, &c. 3*s.*, or a probable total rent of 29*s.* On further consideration it was decided and a resolution carried to this effect: "That it would be impracticable to take the land offered as from April next. That if, however, the land could be offered (200 acres) including the existing house and buildings on a thirty-five years lease from April 6th, 1909, at the same rent (1), the council would be prepared to enter into an agreement to take the same, subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture, the Local Government Board, and of the county council. The Committee do not anticipate that any difficulty will arise in obtaining the required consents. The Committee were obliged for the offer, but owing to the limited period during which it had been before them they felt that they were unable to adopt any other course than herein suggested. In the event of any agreement being arrived at for the taking of any land as from April, 1909, the Committee would require some facilities for adapting the land and premises for the prospective occupiers, previous to the commencement of the tenancy."

The Commissioner, Mr. Talbot Baines, acknowledged that this was the first case that had ever come before the Board of Agriculture where the landlord

Sir Berkeley Sheffield.

had voluntary offered a farm for the purpose of small holdings under the Bill of 1907. A letter dated 24th February, written to Mr. Talbot Baines with reference to the declinature by the county council of the farm except under the conditions which he had just read, was as follows—

> "With reference to the above offer which you are aware was made to the county council of the parts of Lindsey, Lincolnshire, on 29th January, I have received a letter from Mr. Scorer, the clerk to the said council, stating they were unable to accept this offer to take the land and buildings as from 6th April next. I enclose a copy of Mr. Scorer's letter, in which he further states the council would be willing to enter into an agreement to take up a lease commencing 6th April, 1909.
>
> "I am directed by the owner to inform you that, with every wish to see these small holdings made, he cannot undertake to reserve the 200 acres of land and buildings, for which he has already received many applications, until 6th April, 1909, but now wishes to make the offer (he has made to the county council) to you as Commissioner for small holdings (under Section 5 (2) of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907), *i.e.*, for a lease of thirty-five years to commence 6th April next.
>
> "Since the farm must be dealt with at once the owner cannot see his way to allow the offer to remain open for longer than a fortnight from this date, viz., up to 9th March, by which time I shall be glad to receive a definite reply.
>
> "I am further desired to enquire of you whether the Board of Agriculture are not in possession of public funds which could be utilised immediately in order that this opportunity may not be lost."

In reply to that letter, Mr. Baines of the Board of Agriculture wrote the following—

> "I am obliged by your letter, enclosing copy of letter to you from the clerk of the Lindsey County Council.
>
> "I am sorry you cannot see your way to fall in with the views of the Committee, but I think you appreciate their difficulty, and that they are acting only prudently in declining your offer of the farm at Lady Day next. I quite understand, and I think the Committee will also, your position, and your inability to keep the farm in hand for a year in order to lease it to the county council at Lady Day, 1909, but possibly you may be able to offer some other land to the county council before that date.
>
> "The Board of Agriculture are obliged to you for offering to lease the farm to them, but do not think that Section 5 (2) of the Act of 1907 is applicable in this case, as it can hardly be argued that the "county council have failed to fulfil their obligations.' Even if they had the Commissioners would have the same difficulties to contend with that stand in the way

of the county council taking the land this coming Lady Day.

"You will no doubt communicate your decision to the county council."

It would be obvious to anyone with a knowledge of land that no blame was attached in this matter, either to the committee of the county council or to the Board of Agriculture, or to the owner of the land; but what was to be said of the policy of the Act? Here was an instance in which the main contention put forward by the Government, namely, that a system of public hiring and letting was preferable to purchase and resale, was tested; and it was found that the system could not be brought into operation without a serious loss either to the owner or to the public authority and a heavy charge upon the tenant. No provision appeared to be made in the Act for meeting losses of this kind out of national funds; for evidently the Board did not consider that they could contribute to the loss under Section 17 of the Act. Similar questions must arise in many cases of voluntary, and in nearly all cases of compulsory, hiring; for in every case charge for management must be added, and in that event, would a sitting tenant, unless compelled, give the facilities desired? It would seem, therefore, that a serious burden not contemplated by the framers of the Act would fall upon the counties in which the hiring clauses were put into operation. He did not point this out to the Committee for the purpose of disparaging the idea of small holdings or of the Small Holdings Act. He was bound to move a reduction of this Vote on account of what seemed to him to be the absurd proposals of the Government, and also with the view of eliciting exactly what the Government meant to do in the way of meeting such cases as this one. He might say in conclusion, if it would be of any interest to the Committee to know the name of the landlord, that it was himself, and that the farm belonged to him. He would be much obliged if the right hon. Gentleman would inform him what steps the Government proposed to take in view of the fact that the county council could not take over a farm voluntarily offered to them even if, as was perfectly true, it was short notice. But on the other hand, supposing a county council came to him and compelled him to give up that farm to them, he would have received a year's notice. The county council could not have come upon the land without his leave, and they would have had the same difficulties at the end of twelve months as at the end of three months. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item Class II., Vote 11 (Board of Agriculture and Fisheries) be reduced by £100."—(*Sir Berkeley Sheffield.*)

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire. Rossendale): The Committee are aware that I had some connection with the passing of the Act referred to, through the House last year. but they are also aware that since the passing of the Act, I have had no responsibility for its administration, and I have heard nothing of this case up to the moment the hon. Baronet rose to make his speech. I observe in passing, that the charge suggested of 3s. an acre for management seems extremely high, and I should be sorry if management generally throughout the country were likely to work out at anything like that rent per acre. The charge for houses and buildings mentioned by the hon. Baronet was 6s. an acre in this case. Of course, that would depend on the quality and quantity of buildings and the size of house to be provided.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: If the right hon. Gentleman would like, I could give him the exact sum the county council proposed to spend on buildings.

*MR. HARCOURT: For my purpose that is not material. As far as I understand, the county council found some difficulty in taking the farm from the date at which it was offered. I do not understand that they suggested to the hon. Baronet that he should give them the farm at once, but that their tenancy should not commence until a year later than the date at which the farm was offered. [AN HON. MEMBER: But they asked for access.] Of course, it is an obvious fact that they had no right of access to land of which they had not become the tenant. I imagine that what really happened here was that the Lindsay County Council had not got their scheme for small holdings ready. No doubt they had applications, but probably the scheme was not in such a state that they were able to commit themselves in that particular district to the taking, as from Lady Day this year, of a farm of 200 acres. I am sure nobody in the House will doubt the generosity of the intention and action of the hon. Baronet, and his warm desire to meet the demand which appears to have arisen in this district for small holdings, but his offer to the Commissioners was not really a practical one, though a perfectly honest one, because the county council are undoubtedly going to fulfil their duty, though, perhaps, not by taking this particular farm on a particular day. They are obviously anxious to fulfil their duty and, therefore, it would be impossible for the Commissioners to attempt to act in default of the county council as if they had failed in their duty; and in any case they could not act in default of the county council without having given considerable notice and gone through all the forms prescribed by the Act. Again, the Commissioners could not have acted in this case experimentally, because experiments have to be made where there is no obvious demand or where such demand is not likely to be made. Neither of these circumstances existed in the case put by the hon. Member. The hon. Member says that from his own experience and that of other landlords, it was difficult to get the Act into operation. I can assure him that that is not the case. There must undoubtedly, in some cases, be a little delay in getting the Act to work, but I can only wish that there were more landlords in the country who would so willingly and so early put land at a moderate rent at the disposal of the county councils, and I hope that no difficulties may arise which will prevent those county councils immediately availing themselves of the facilities provided by the Act.

Mr. CHAPLIN: It is perfectly true, no doubt, that the right hon. Gentleman who had charge of this Act during its passage through the House of Commons, and who conducted it with great skill and ability, has nothing to do with its administration. But what is the position with which we are confronted to-day? Here is a matter which has been the subject of prolonged correspondence and negotiation between the Board of Agriculture, the Lincolnshire County Council, and my hon. friend behind me. That correspondence and the position submitted to the Committee to-day raise a question of the greatest possible interest and very considerable importance with regard to the whole future of the administration of this Act. Although we have the satisfaction of opposing a Cabinet which is sometimes described as a Cabinet of all the talents, it appears to me that they are unable to produce on those benches one single person who is in a position to deal with this question. I frankly admit that my right hon. friend has made the very best of what seems to me to be an exceedingly bad case for the Government. But that is not all. When a question of great importance is raised by a member of the House so lucidly as it has been by my hon. friend, there is no one here on the part of the Government who is able to give any valid or useful explanation. This is one of the most remarkable cases which has ever occurred in the House of Commons in connection with a great measure which has just been brought into operation. [Ministerial cries of "Oh."]

Mr. HARCOURT: The Minister responsible for the Board of Agriculture is absent through illness, and not the slightest intimation was given to me or to any other member of the Government, that this question would be raised.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I am quite ready to admit that the right hon. Gentleman is exonerated from blame.

Mr. HARCOURT: I am speaking for my colleagues as well as for myself.

Mr. CHAPLIN: That does not exonerate the Government, because the Minister for Agriculture has known of this matter for some time, and his first duty was to tell his colleagues that there had been a correspondence regarding this peculiar and very critical action taken by the Board of Agriculture and the County Council of Lincolnshire, and that an Amendment had been put down on the Paper by the hon. Member for Brigg for the reduction of this Vote which, of course, meant that my hon. friend was going to raise this question on that correspondence. The President of the Board of Agriculture has not informed his colleagues. Why did he not submit the case and send the correspondence to my right hon. friend, who would have then been in a better position than he is now to deal with it? What I say is that there is no excuse available for the position when the case has been raised, and when the correspondence has been going on for months, that no Minister is ready to rise and advise the House of Commons upon it. I saw my hon. friend this morning just before I came down to the House. I had seen his Amendment on the Paper, and I confess I had one of my own; but from what I heard from him, and from what I have heard to-day, it seems to me that the case is perfectly clear and simple, and it is one which will arise over and over again in connection with the Act of last year. A landlord offered land suited in every possible way for small holdings. I know something of agriculture, and I know that the land is precisely of that kind adapted for small holdings, and it was offered at a rent which seems to me to be exceedingly moderate. The offer was an exceptionally liberal one, the rent asked being 2s. an acre less than the landlord had been offered from some other quarter. During the passage of this Act through the House hon. Members were deprived of every opportunity of raising points upon it, but I think that I called attention to this difficulty which might arise on more than one occasion. That difficulty has arisen in this case out of a demand for access to the land before the tenancy was agreed upon—a thing which the right hon. Gentleman himself has already pointed out cannot be asked for or expected to be allowed. I do not hesitate to say that the concession of access to a farm for the purpose of making it suitable for small holdings while another tenant is in possession would be an impossible condition. The farm would be put into an unworkable condition for the tenant, and, moreover, when the county council or the Agriculture Commission finally made up their minds to take the farm they would still have all their work to do to put it in a condition suitable for small holdings. I cannot help thinking that when the Act was passing through Committee, it was always acknowledged as a fact that a very considerable sum would have to be paid for tenant right, and that seems to have been altogether forgotten and lost sight of. I tried to bring the matter before the members of the Committee so that provision should be made for it. So far as I could follow the right hon. Gentleman in the observations he has made, in the view of the Commissioners a very considerable addition to the rent—9s. or 9s. 6d.—would be required from the small holder before the occupation could be made to meet the charges upon it. The outgoing tenant would be entitled to claim, of course, as he is now, what is called sometimes tenant right, and sometimes an inventory on leaving his farm. Well, on a farm of this description the inventory comes always to a year and a half or perhaps two years rent, which would mean a considerable sum. I suppose this fact had dawned on the Commissioner when he was brought face to face with the case. As a man of business the Commissioner would know perfectly well that in that event the Government or the county council would be placed in a very difficult position. During our discussions on matters of this kind we were told by my right hon. friend that that would be met by an adjustment of rent, but no adjustment of rent would be able adequately to supply a sum of this magnitude. This case only confirms my view, which I have always held, of the great mistake which was made in basing the Act almost entirely on compulsory hiring instead of on purchase. I repeat that the Government through their representative have made out no case whatever, and that as this correspondence has been going on for months between the Board of Agriculture and my hon. friend, and notice of an Amendment had been given to the Vote, and it was perfectly well-known that this case would be raised on this particular occasion which had been specially devoted to opportunities for criticism of the action of the Board of Agriculture, it is a very remarkable thing that there is no member of the Government present to answer the case brought forward with so great moderation and ability by my hon. friend.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes) said the passing of the Small Holdings Act had revealed that throughout the country there was a very real and genuine demand for small holdings, far larger than was anticipated by some of the strongest advocates of the movement. The first step which every county council had to take was to satisfy itself as to the genuineness of the demand and as to the capacity of the would-be tenant, his position, and his general desirability as a tenant. That was what the county councils were engaged upon at the present time, and they were not in a position this Lady Day either to take or to refuse farms. They were now engaged in holding local inquiries; interviewing the would-be tenants, testing them, and finding out whether they possessed the means of becoming desirable tenants. This was a very considerable work and was taking up a considerable amount of time. It was also costing a certain amount of money. He hoped that, under these circumstances, the Board of Agriculture would interpret the clause relating to preliminary expenses in the widest and most generous fashion. The Act laid down that the preliminary expenses in connection with the acquisition of land must be refunded by the Treasury. He asked that the expenses incurred inquiring into the means of the people and their desirability as tenants should be interpreted as costs and expenses incurred in connection with the acquisition of the land. The other day the chairman of the Cambridgeshire Small Holdings Committee went to a fruit growing village to hold an inquiry. There were there no less than 250 applications from people who wanted land upon which to grow strawberries, gooseberries, and raspberries. It took that committee a week to make these inquiries, and even then they only got through two-thirds of their work. If local committees were willing to work like that and county councils were willing to incur expenses and send their members to remote parts of the district, he hoped the Board of Agriculture would take a generous view of this clause and see that the cost of such proceedings was remitted to the county council, and also the other expenses he had referred to in connection with the preliminary acquisition of land. When the inquiries had reached the point at which they had eliminated the applicants who were obviously no good, and when they were dealing only with the genuine applicant, that was the time for a survey of the land, and he asked that the cost of this survey should be included in the preliminary expenses of the scheme. He had been informed that the cost of the fee paid to the agent employed for this purpose to survey some particular farm would be recoverable, and he would like that privilege to be extended also to the cost incurred by an official of the council sent down to inquire and report upon the adaptability of the land for the purposes of the Act. It seemed to him that some difficulty would arise about this question of agents' fees. The salary of the land agent employed by the council would be thrown upon the small holdings fund of the county, and would be a charge upon all the small holdings in the county. When there were a large number of small holding schemes in a county embracing 2,000 or 3,000 acres, the amount charged to each holding would be small, but where there might be only about two schemes it would be impossible to charge the whole cost of the preliminary inquiries upon those two schemes without running the rent up to a prohibitive point. He therefore asked that the Board of Agriculture should be prepared to treat the county council in a most generous and sympathetic fashion. He hoped the First Commissioner would be able to supply the council with model plans for buildings and also for cottages which would not be too expensive. From what he could see the county councils were taking up the work very well, and were working very sympathetically, and what they required from the Board of Agriculture was not coercion but a good deal of that sympathetic consideration which a central department could give.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said that what they wished to discover was whether the county councils were taking this question in hand, and who was to bear the cost of the rent of the farm during the time it was being prepared for the new condition of things under small holdings, which might in some cases be a long and in others a short period. The right hon. Gentleman had admitted that the landlord who was giving up the land must not be expected to bear the expense of admitting the new tenant, sometimes compulsorily, into possession of the land before paying any rent. As he read Clause 17 the Government would not be able to make such a grant out of their fund. Nobody desired that the new tenant's rent should be raised permanently to cover the expenses of the transition period, which were incurred in connection with more the administration than the development of the land. In every case where the county council had to prepare the land for the new small holders the cost of the rent and other expenses ought to fall upon the county fund. That matter was not contemplated when the Act was passing through. He hoped that before this subject was passed on one side they would have some explanation from the Government for the benefit of all county councils as to where this expenditure for putting the land in order and preparing it for small holdings was to fall.

MR. WINFREY (Norfolk, S.W.) said he did not think the difficulties in the way of letting land for small holdings were mainly those of preparing the land for the tenants. He thought the main difficulty was that the county councils had not had time to prepare their schemes, fully to see the applicants and generally to formulate their plans. He did not hold a brief for the Lindsey County Council; he thought perhaps that that council had been a little too timid in the matter, and that if they had cropped the farm themselves and sold their crops at Michaelmas they would have been not losers, but gainers, and would have had the summer six months in which to have placed their houses and buildings upon it. He had taken farms at Lady-Day, and farmed them for six months, and during that time he had been adapting them for small holdings, and in no case had he lost money by the arrangement. Still he was not quite sure that they could expect a public authority to do what a private individual did, and therefore he did not think they could complain of the Lindsey County Council too much. With regard to the question of who had to bear the cost while the farm was being adapted, it was only a very small part of the land that was required for houses and buildings. The land was there for cultivation. It might be a little inconvenient for small holders to farm their land until they had proper houses and buildings, but he had always found that small holders were ready to be placed at some slight inconvenience if they could get settled on the land. Only this Michaelmas the Lincolnshire Small Holdings Association had taken some 600 acres of Crown land, which was absolutely bare of buildings, and they had divided it up into small holdings of 20 and 30 acres. The men started into occupation on 11th October, but hurry as they might they could not get the houses and buildings ready for them in time. The men went into their houses at Christmas and he knew they were put to some inconvenience, but they paid rent for their land from last Michaelmas, and they would pay for their houses from Lady-Day. Therefore, he did not think that public authorities would find that great difficulty in adapting farms. And they must remember that some of these farms had houses and buildings upon them. The hon. Member had asked who was to pay the tenant right? He was rather surprised to hear that question. Of course, the incoming tenant would pay the tenant right. The small holder was always prepared to pay his tenant right. He had had to deal with some hundreds of them, and he had never heard of one who was not prepared to pay his tenant right in a manly way. He thought the charge of 6s. per acre for farm houses and buildings being adapted to the land was a very excessive figure, but he thought as to the 3s. for management that when they came to look into it they would find that it included the rates. The hon. Baronet the Member for Brigg had now left the House, but he would take the opportunity of communicating with him, and if he would give him a fortnight to consider, he thought the Lincolnshire Small Holdings Committee would be ready to take the farm which the county council did not seem inclined to do.

Mr. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) thought it was obvious that there would be enormous expenditure in cases in which a county council, whether they wished it or not, would be compelled to take the whole farm for the purpose of dividing it into small holdings. The President of the Board of Agriculture had very properly written round to the county councils telling them that they should take the whole farm, and in many cases that was done. Most out-goings in the South of England were at Michaelmas, and in a great many cases a considerable time must elapse between the taking of a farm from the landowner and the letting of it to a large number of small holders, because there were not only the buildings to be put up, but the county council would have to erect cottages as well. In addition, some fields would have to be fenced to make them smaller than they were now, and there was also the question of providing a water supply and making additional roads. One could not do all these things while someone was in possession of the land, and it must, therefore, follow that a considerable period would elapse from the time when a farm was taken to the time when it could be let to small holders, and he wished that they could have had that evening some declaration from the Government as to who was to bear the cost of rent during the interval. It was quite certain that there would be a loss of rent to the county council, and it seemed obvious that to meet this expense was one of the objects of the Small Holdings Account. He agreed with the right hon. Member for Wimbledon that it was not courteous on the part of the Government when they saw various Amendments on the Paper in reference to this Small Holdings Act that they could not supply some Member of the Government to deal with the question. He was sorry that the representative of the Board of Agriculture was not present, and regretted the cause of his absence, but one would have thought that the Government could have found some Member of it who would have devoted some time to considering the subject and the facts which had been brought forward that evening. He hoped that the information which they desired would be forthcoming. With regard to the general working of the Act, he thought it was quite true that a very large number of applicants had come forward, and a very much larger number of people than were expected. But it was likely that a considerable portion of these applicants would drop out under the scrutiny of the county council, because their applications were due to the fact that people in the country were led by Liberal Members at the last general election to believe that they were going to have free land, but when they found that they would have to pay for the tenant right and stock he thought that a good many of them would drop out. The hon. Member for Wiltshire had brought forward a good many points as to the application of the Act, and he himself thought it was obvious that, as far as they had gone at present, county councils had found that they would have to charge small holders about 10 per cent. more than they would pay the landowners, in consequence of the many expenses in connection with small holdings, and in connection with the inquiries which were being held throughout the country by the councils. They would have to take surveys of the land and employ gentlemen to look after the necessary repairs and collect the rent. Some of these preliminary expenses might very properly be paid out of the Small Holdings Account, which would enable county councils to charge small holders as low a rent as possible. In conclusion, he hoped that before the discussion was brought to an end some Member of the Government would give them some idea of the nature of this Account, and of the position of the central body in regard to it.

*Mr. HARCOURT: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon felt so greatly the indignation which he expressed as to the imaginary misconduct of the Government, or he would have remained in his place to hear the explanation which I was ready to offer. I do not think, moreover, anyone would have been likely to assume, on an Amendment put down by the hon. Member for Brigg to the Vote on Account, that he was going to attack, or intended to make an attack upon the Department on the question of the letting of one of his own farms to the county council. If he had intimated his intention of doing so, I am sure the Department would have furnished the information. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon seems to have forgotten some of the details of the Act, and he seems to treat it exclusively as an Act which contains hiring powers, and as if there were no power given to the county council to purchase land to be divided up into small holdings either by agreement or upon compulsion. It has been said that in regard to the question of tenant right, or inventory, or tillages, which are not quite interchangeable terms, that I stated in Committee upstairs that these matters could be dealt with by an adjustment of rent, but I am quite sure that hon. Gentlemen who were present will bear me out when I say that the case where I suggested that the matter could be dealt with by an adjustment of rent was where severance occurred, in taking away a field or a number of fields from a particular farm. In my opinion, these matters of tenant right, or inventory, or tillages, can be treated as part of the equipment of small holdings. The county councils may borrow on a long term for equipment, and, therefore, the rent paid for (say) six months during the process of equipment, although it will not be all lost, may perfectly fairly be charged to that head, and spread over a long term under a loan by the county council. But I have never said that that is a matter which can be dealt with by an adjustment of rent. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Wiltshire has asked that there shall be a liberal interpretation of the words in the Act "the preliminary expenses of the acquisition of land." Of course, it is impossible for me to lay down any legal or exact Treasury definition of these words, but I am in a position to say that the Board of Agriculture will interpret those words in a broad and generous sense, with a desire to give every assistance to all county councils, so as to facilitate their action in the acquisition of land and in any inquiry which it is necessary to make before the land can be acquired. I think, though I do not desire to pledge myself, that the cost of survey of the land, at all events, in many cases, may be included as a preliminary. I think also that, where an agent's remuneration is allocated to different services which he may perform, certain parts of that remuneration may well form part also of the preliminary cost of acquisition. I hope in these ways the action of the county councils may be facilitated, and that we may be able to meet them generously, and far more than half-way in so translating these words.

MR. HICKS BEACH said the right hon. Gentleman, while he stated that some of the expenses of the agent might be borne out of the central fund as part of the preliminary expenses, had not answered the question whether after the small holdings had been started the agent's expenses in regard to the collection of rent and repairs could be so borne.

MR. HARCOURT: Oh, no, I do not go to that length, only the preliminary inquiries which may be made before the acquisition of the holding. Obviously, the collection of rents and cost of subsequent management must be charged upon the small holders.

SIR F. BANBURY said he wanted to draw the attention of the Committee to the defence of the Board of Agriculture which they had heard raised on the other side of the House by the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk. The hon. Gentleman, who had, he believed, considerable experience of this subject, being concerned with a society or association for taking land and letting it out in small holdings, had said that there was no difficulty whatever, because the county council had to take the land if the tenant went out at Lady-Day, and they could crop it until Michaelmas and make a profit out of it. But the hon. Member's conscience seemed rather to restrict him, for he had some doubt as to whether the county council was to turn farmer. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman, who had contemplated a great many things, had contemplated that the county councils were in future to become farmers of land left vacant, for that would be a very poor outlook for the unfortunate ratepayers. He would point out to the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk that in order to crop the land, as far as his experience went, they must have horses, implements, and seed, etc., all of which the county council did not possess. When the county council took a farm in March it had to buy horses, implements, and a variety of other things necessary to crop the land. They sold the crop in September if gathered, or disposed of it afterwards. What had they to do with all those implements and horses when they were done with them? They had to sell them. ["Hear, hear."] It was very easy to say "Hear, hear," but it was not so easy to sell the things once they had got them and they had been used. A horse cost £40 or £45, and a plough £6 or £7, and at the end of six months, after they had been used, they would have to be sold at a greatly reduced price, and the loss would be far greater than the profit that they might have on the crop. The hon. Member for Woodbridge was in his place, and he was almost certain that the hon. Gentleman would admit that during the first year a tenant did not hope to make anything out of his tenancy. The landlord, if he held the land for a short time did not hope to make any profit, and if he had to hold the farm for a year before the tenancy began, he always looked upon that year as a certain loss. He himself was very often advised by his agent not to take a farm on for a short time, because he would be certain to make nothing out of it. He did not pretend to be a great agriculturist or a great man of business, but he thought he could manage a farm as well as the county council. If an ordinary farmer could not make a profit when holding a farm for a short time, he was quite sure that the county council could not. Then the hon. Gentleman said: "Oh, the tenant is ready to pay in a manly sort of way." It was not a question of "a manly sort of way," but whether the tenant had the money or not with which to pay. No doubt if he had the money he would pay it, whether in a manly way or otherwise. He paid a just debt if he had the money; if he had not the money he could not pay. He could not see where the adjective "manly" came in. It was the clap-trap held by the other side. The tenant might be very manly, but unless he had the money in his pocket his manliness was of no use whatever to him. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the valuations might be spread by the county council over a number of years. But where was the security of the county council? The valuations of horses, implements, etc., were made for the incoming tenant by a valuer. Supposing the incoming tenant did not keep the farm in the same cultivation as when he took it over; he was letting the farm down; he could not pay the rent; he was turned out, and the valuation payment was spread over a number of years. But where did the county council come in? If they let it again, they would not get the same valuation that they ought to have received when it was taken over by the small holder, because there was not so much value put into the land as there had been when the farmer tenant went out. Therefore, the county council must lose. It seemed to him that it was a most dangerous doctrine for the right hon. Gentleman to hold out that the county council was to be allowed to spread the valuation over a number of years. It was very hard on the ratepayers. There were one or two members of the Labour Party present. One of them had held forth strongly that afternoon on the iniquity of the Agricultural Rating Act, and of the burdens cast on artisans in towns in consequence of it. Why did not one or two hon. Gentlemen below the gangway get up and make an observation on this point, because artisans would have to pay the money which the county council ought to have collected from the small holders; and when the small holders came to grief, as in nine cases out of ten they would, the county council would be without the money of these tenants. He had a small holding farm of about forty acres, and six weeks ago the tenant had not got his hay crop gathered. It was cut in the autumn, and it was out until the middle of February. An adjoining farmer gave him a sovereign for his ten acres of hay, which ran about two tons to the acre, in order to use it as fodder for his ewes. That was what was going to happen. The small holder would get his hay crop cut, and then a shower would come on and he would have in the intervals of fine weather to collect ten acres. He had been much struck with the knowledge of Wiltshire possessed by the President of the Local Government Board. If he went down to Cricklade he would find that in a small holding some five miles from there the facts were as he had stated. He hoped his hon. friend would go to a division, because this was an extremely important question, especially to ratepayers who did not happen to be small holders; but he also hoped that before the debate closed they would have some indication that the Act was to be administered in a businesslike manner. It was a very unbusinesslike suggestion about the payments being spread over long terms of years. It was only a short time ago that they had a debate on the extremely bad policy of spending money on military works by way of loan. The right hon. Gentleman wanted to do exactly the same thing in regard to small holdings. All that loans did was to spread the cost over a series of years. He would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that he was advocating the policy which they had pursued in the case of the Army; but, whereas they had the funds of the country at their back, he only had the funds of the unfortunate ratepayers behind him. He hoped his arguments might have some effect, and that the right hon. Gentleman would get up and say he recognised the force of them and that he could not advocate what the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for War had refused to do, but would give instructions that the spreading of the payments over a series of years by the county councils was not to be carried out.

MR. BRIDGEMAN said it was very astonishing how little interest the Government took in a matter which certainly was the best thing they did last year, and in regard to which they had boasted all over the country. They apparently had not the least idea how the Act had been working, or how the money Parliament had voted had been spent. The right hon. Gentleman had been asked how the £100,000 voted for the purpose of the Act had been spent; he had made no attempt to reply. It really was odd, considering this was a Vote for agriculture, that it should never have occurred to any of the Government that there would be a debate on the Small Holdings Act, which they had boasted was a great measure to bring the people back to the land. Was it remarkable that they should take some interest in seeing whether that measure had worked well? Surely the hon. Gentleman could give them some instance of the way in which this £100,000 had been spent, what purposes it had been spent upon, and how much had been spent. That was what they wanted to know, and they were entitled to know it. Several hon. Members had asked, and he could not imagine a better opportunity for letting them know.

*MR. HARCOURT: I think the hon. Gentleman is mistaken in thinking that his question has been asked. The £100,000 has been referred to, but I have not been asked how it has been spent. It has not been spent yet. The time has not come for spending £100,000 for paying the preliminary expenses. The salaries of the Commissioners will be provided separately out of monies voted by Parliament.

SIR F. BANBURY: Could the hon. Gentleman say how many new holders there are—how many people have taken advantage of the Act to become small holders?

*MR. HARCOURT: I suppose the hon. Baronet means how many applications?

SIR F. BANBURY: No, I do not. A great number of people have made applications under the impression that they were going to get land for nothing or for £1 an acre or for a very small amount. What I want to know is, are there any people who have actually taken possession of small holdings at present?

*MR. HARCOURT: The applications have not yet been sifted, and I do not know whether they have yet obtained small holdings from the county councils. They have in some cases obtained small holdings direct from landlords. I am one of them.

SIR F. BANBURY: I alluded to county councils and not to small holdings by agreement. I do not think there is one.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: My question is, has any part of that £100,000 been spent. Are we to understand that none of it has been spent as yet?

MR. HARCOURT: I believe none of it has been spent.

MR. T. L. CORBETT greatly regretted that the charge had been made, for the first time he believed in the history of that House, against his hon. friend the Member for the City of London, that he had not carefully studied the subject on which he spoke. His speeches were marked by complete knowledge of the subject on which he spoke, and he had expressed very clearly the views that a large number of others held on this subject. He thought it was hardly tactful or just of the First Commissioner for Works, although they all respected him, to bring such a charge against his hon. friend. He was not sure that he had correctly heard his hon. friend say that the county councils did the work entrusted to them in a businesslike manner. He very gravely doubted that. He had had five years' experience of one county council, and although it was largely reformed since the days when he belonged to it, not because he had left its counsels, but because of an entire change in its constitution, he thought the last thing that could be said of it was that it did its work in a workmanlike and businesslike manner.

SIR F. BANBURY: I said that so far as I knew the county councils of England were carrying out this particular work in a businesslike manner.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said he accepted his hon. friend's explanation, and he felt that that largely explained what he felt to be a lapse from the hon. Baronet's usual logical description of measures before the House. He felt bound to protest against the charge brought by the First Commissioner of Works that his hon. friend had not even read the Act which he was discussing. That was a very grave charge for any member of the Government to bring against any Member. He did not suppose his hon. friend minded, but others did, and they thought it was hardly a fair or a just charge to be brought by a member of the Government, or anyone with any knowledge of their debates against an hon. Member who was so careful in his facts, and so deeply versed in every Bill, that he discussed.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 47; Noes, 167. (Division List No. 43.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F.
Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H.T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach. Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Craik, Sir Henry
Delany, William
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward

Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Magnus, Sir Philip
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. T. L. Corbett.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Elibank, Master of
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis, J.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Mooney, J. J.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore, C. (Radcliffe
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said he rose to draw the attention of the Committee to the administration of the Post Office in regard to political societies allowed within the postal service. He wished also to draw attention to certain Answers which had been given by the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster-General upon this particular subject. Perhaps it would be the most convenient course if he drew attention to the way in which this matter first came forward. In the autumn of last year certain servants in the Post Office had their attention drawn to a Socialistic League, which had its existence in the Post Office, and they wrote to the Postmaster-General in October drawing his attention to the existence of the Socialistic League, a society which consisted more or less of advanced Socialists. The opening letter came from a Mr. Read, employed in the Central Telegraph Office, to the Postmaster-General, on 18th October, 1907, in which he said—

> "I venture with respect to draw your attention to a state of things which exists in this great branch of His Majesty's Civil Service. There exists in the Central Telegraph Office a society of more or less advanced Socialists. The increasing activity of this society is producing a feeling of considerable alarm and apprehension in many of us, and it is considered desirable, nay, necessary, that an educational movement be inaugurated with the object of dissipating, if possible, this danger to the service."

It was admitted that this was an educational movement and not a political one. The answer of the Postmaster-General to this letter was—

> "As you are doubtless aware, Post Office servants are not forbidden to join political societies, but at the same time they are expected to maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and they must not publicly put themselves forward on any side."

In a further letter sent to the Postmaster-General on 7th December, 1907, by Mr. Read, the conditions were distinctly laid down upon which it was proposed to form a branch of the Primrose League in connection with the Central Telegraph Office, London. That letter stated—

> "With great respect I beg to point out the following, in the hope that you may see your way clear to modify your decision :—(*a*) That the branch of the Primrose League which it is proposed to form in connection with the Central Telegraph Office would be somewhat unique in its character, as its activity would be directed against the organised league of Socialists existing in the Central Telegraph Office, apparently with your permission. (*b*) We have no intention whatever of taking part in political matters except so far as Socialism is a political danger or force. (*c*) That our efforts would be solely of an educational and social character. (*d*) That we should impress upon all who might become members the necessity for taking no prominent part in political matters.
>
> "Feeling earnestly that the Civil Service and particularly the Post Office, as part of the constitution of the country, are in danger from the rapid growth of Socialism, our hope and desire is that we may be able to do something to arrest its growth; at any rate in the Central Telegraph Office, and as Socialism is an organised force there, it seems to us that it can only be met by an organised force; hence our desire to form a branch of the Primrose League. May I also be allowed to point out that so far from overlooking the reference contained in your reply of the 19th ult. as to holding office under the League, I merely expressed the hope that in electing our secretary, etc., from our membership we should enjoy the same privileges as the Pioneer Socialist League, a political society the officers of which are, and always have been, postal servants. This, of course, presupposes the fact that we shall not hold office under the League, but only in our own habitation. In conclusion I should like to lay emphasis on the fact that the attitude of other branches of the Primrose League does not concern us. In educating our colleagues in the maintenance of religion, the estates of the realm, and the Imperial ascendancy of the British Empire we cannot reasonably be considered as allying ourselves with any political party. We pledge ourselves to maintain the strictest reserve in political matters, except as far as the above aims are concerned."

That letter laid down very distinctly that what was proposed by the Primrose League in the Post Office was that they should exercise the reserve which the Postmaster-General had laid down in his rules and regulations, and that they would not adopt the attitude of supporting any particular candidate at an election. After Parliament met this year some one or two Questions were put to the Postmaster-General with the object of eliciting what were the aims and objects of this Socialistic League, and whether it had been formed with the right hon. Gentleman's sanction and approval. The reply he gave to a Question put by him on 6th February last was as follows—

> "As far as I am aware there is nothing in the programme of the League to connect it with party politics."

He had in his hand the organ of the League for last year, published in August, which distinctly stated that the Pioneer Socialistic League had for its object the propagation of the principles of Socialism, its field being primarily, but not exclusively, the *personnel* of the various postal services. This organ also went on to explain what they meant by Socialism. [LABOUR cries of "Read it."] All right, he would read it if hon. Members wished to hear it. [Cries of "Yes."]

> "By Socialism is implied that system of society in which the land and the means of production, distribution, and exchange are collectively owned, their administration and control to be exercised and controlled by the democratic State in the interests of the entire community."

That was the object of a society which the Postmaster-General allowed to exist in the Post Office. To show whether it was intended to be a political society or not he would mention that there was a reference made in the same organ to the Colne Valley election, in which the hope was expressed that that election was but the first of a series of triumphs for social democracy. He would like to ask the Postmaster-General whether he considered that political or not, and whether he thought that that was exercising the certain reserve which he had laid down in the rules and regulations of the Post Office should be observed. The same organ of the League further stated that—

> "A congratulatory telegram was sent to Comrade Grayson on the success of his fight for revolutionary Socialism."

And it was further announced that Comrade Grayson telegraphed back—

> "Thanks to all for the splendid collection towards my election expenses."

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON: How much?

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS said that at the end of the pamphlet it was stated that every member of the League should consider that it was his duty to subscribe to one of its war-chests, and fresh subscribers could hand in their names to the divisional collector. He would like to ask the Postmaster-General whether, seeing what the avowed object of that society was, and seeing that they were deliberately collecting money for the support of particular candidates, it was being continued with his sanction. Replying to a further Question on 23rd February last, the Postmaster-General said—

> "It is specifically stated that they may not serve on a Committee having for its object to promote or prevent the return of a particular candidate to Parliament, nor support or oppose any particular candidate or party either by public speaking or writing."

The organ he had been quoting from was not writing, but it was a printed document which was allowed with the right hon. Gentleman's sanction to be published in the Post Office service. He had in his hand the rules issued to the House last Friday for the guidance of servants in the Post Office. They were very simple and repeated what had been said in the replies previously given to Questions in the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman concluded his Memorandum by quoting what Mr. Gladstone said in 1893, when he laid down that—

> "The only restriction by the custom of the public service on persons employed is that persons in the permanent employment of the State shall not take a prominent or active part in political contests and it is not intended in future that any other restrictive rule should be imposed on the service of the Post Office."

The Postmaster-General had tried to add to these rules, and as far as he could understand the nicety of the distinction which had been drawn, it was as to whether these societies in the Central Telegraph Office were branches connected with outside bodies. He supposed that most of these societies were connected with outside bodies. He knew the branch of the Tariff Reform League was. He was not, however, making any complaint as to the existence of these societies; what he did complain of was that the right hon. Gentleman allowed some societies but not others. There was a feeling in the Primrose League that the Postmaster-General had acted rather hurriedly in this matter, and that he had given his Answers to Questions without considering where they would lead him. The Primrose League was not a party organisation. [Cries of "Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members might think it was, but it was formed specially for the purpose of supporting religion, the estates of the realm, and the Empire. [Laughter.] Did hon. Members who laughed not support those principles. The object of the promoters was to confine the work of the League to those three principles. The proposed branch of the Primrose League at the Central Telegraph Office gave a pledge to the Postmaster-General that they would strictly conform to his rules as to exercising a proper reserve and not support the funds or the candidature of any particular Members of this House. And yet the right hon. Gentleman persisted in his refusal to allow a branch of the Primrose League to be formed at the Central Telegraph Office. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to reconsider the whole question. He begged to move a reduction of this Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed—"That Item Revenue Departments, Vote 3, be reduced by £100."—(*Mr Samuel Roberts.*)

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) said that they did not raise this question from any political motive nor in order to make an attack on the Socialists. They raised it in order to get equal rights for all political organisations. When the question was formerly raised in the House the right hon. Gentleman, replying to a Question put to him, said that the Primrose League was a political organisation identified with party politics, and that Post Office servants ought not to hold office in that league. Since then the right hon. Gentleman had stated that Civil servants could individually or collectively subscribe to any political organisation they chose. On 18th February the subject was raised by a Question to the right hon. Gentleman, and on that occasion he said that the decision which he had come to with regard to the Primrose League was founded on the existing rules governing the conduct of Post Office servants. He held in his hand the existing regulations, which were given on Friday last in Answer to a Question. The very first words were—

> "There are no regulations specifically dealing with political associations."

He did not see what right the Postmaster-General had to make the reply he did make to the Question put to him. He noticed that one of the rules said—

> "Nevertheless, it is expected of them as public servants that they should maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and not put themselves forward on one side or the other."

Yet the right hon. Gentleman had openly admitted that he had allowed a political organisation in the Post Office to identify itself entirely with a Party in that House. The right hon. Gentleman had told them on several occasions that the Civil Servants Socialist League was not a political league. All that he and his friends asked was, if it was not a political league—What was it? Would the right hon. Gentleman get up and tell the Committee what the constitution of the league was. Beyond that, as the right hon. Gentleman was undoubtedly well aware, there was another association in the Post Office which was just as strongly identified with a political Party as the Civil Servants Socialist League, known as the Fawcett Association. It was an association which was openly acknowledged by the right hon. Gentleman. It was openly identified with the Labour Party. He held in his hand the balance sheet, which showed that the association contributed during last year to the Labour Party as subscription, as sustenance, and for affiliation, £63 10s. 4d. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had seen the balance sheet, and whether it had been passed by him. There it was laid down that the Fawcett Association was affiliated to the Labour Party in that House. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether that met with his approval or not. The Committee must recognise that the right hon. Gentleman had not behaved in a wise manner with regard to this question. He and his friends demanded that political associations of every sort should receive equal rights in the Department which the right hon. Gentleman represented.

THE POSTMASTER - GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am very glad that this question has been raised in this form, and I have certainly no quarrel with the hon. Gentlemen who have raised it, if they have done so honestly, as I am sure they have. I have in this matter been accused of dealing with various associations in a different manner—of recognising the *status* of one and refusing to recognise the *status* of another, although they are equally political. That is the case sought to be made out against me. I can only say that, so far as I am concerned, I have had no politics in my mind at all. I have endeavoured as far as I can to mete out even-handed justice among all the various societies, and if I have failed, that, at all events, has been my desire. Hon. Gentlemen are perfectly entitled to raise the question in the form they now propose. I would ask the Committee to consider what the position is in regard to this matter, and what are the existing rules. They are rules which were drawn up many years ago and are to a certain extent antiquated, and in some ways ambiguous, and I am obliged to interpret them to the best of my ability. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment has already read extracts from the rules, and it may be as well to read the main substance of the rules. I put them again in possession of the Committee in order that they may see what the regulations are. The hon. Member for the Holderness Division said that these rules did not apply to associations.

MR. STANLEY WILSON: I quoted your words.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The hon. Member said that these rules apply to individuals, but in interpreting them I have to see, if individuals aggregate themselves, what will be their conduct as associations. As a matter of fact, these particular rules apply to the individual. It is the individual officer, and not an association, who would come under disciplinary action if, in any case, an association, or a member of it, infringed the rules of the Post Office. I hope hon. Gentlemen do not think that I was quibbling in that respect. I was only using ordinary terms, and it is quite clear that I have no power as head of the Post Office to act against an association as such, but I have power to act against any individual officers who may form an association and commit a breach of the Post Office rules. The rules are thus really just to them. The only parts of which I need seize the House are contained in one or two sentences. I gave them in full on Friday or Saturday, and I will quote the point which really affects the present discussion—

> "Rule 42 (*a*.) Officers of the Post Office, having been relieved of the electoral disabilities to which they were formerly subject, are now eligible to be placed on the Parliamentary register, and to vote at a Parliamentary election. Nevertheless, it is expected of them as public servants that they should maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and not put themselves forward on one side or the other."

The two substantial rules are—

> "That no postmaster, sub-postmaster, or other servant of the Department shall serve on a committee having for its object to promote or prevent the return of a particular candidate to Parliament."

> "That he shall not support or oppose any particular candidate or Party either by public speaking or writing."

These are the regulations which really affect the matter. Then there is also the principle laid down by Mr. Gladstone in 1893 when, as First Lord of the Treasury, he was dealing with the Civil Service as a whole. He said—

> "The only restriction by the custom of the public service on persons employed is that persons in the permanent employment of the State shall not take a prominent or active part in political contests, and it is not intended in future that any other restrictive rule should be imposed on the service of the Post Office."

That is to say, Post Office servants can vote or join any association they like, and they can either individually or in the aggregate subscribe to any association or society they choose; they can practically take an interest in party politics so long as they maintain a certain reserve in political matters. That is the rule that governs the action, not only of Post Office servants, but the whole of the Civil Service. I confess that the guidance of these rules is not very great, and they have to be interpreted partly by common sense, as far as I am able to exercise any amount of that quality. I quite agree that the Postmaster-General has to interpret them with equity and impartiality, and the policy I have laid down for myself in regard to this matter is this—to give the maximum amount of liberty to Post Office servants as Civil servants which is consistent with the words I have read, namely: "that they should maintain a certain reserve in political matters." I confess that I see no objection whatever to Post Office or other Civil servants forming themselves into associations or societies. I do not think it would be a disadvantage to encourage them to take an intelligent interest in the problems of the day which they have, with others, to decide by their votes when the election comes. The more interest they take in politics generally, perhaps the less they will be inclined to take in the permanent officials of the Department, and, in particular, the Postmaster-General. We are not dealing, of course, with benefit and other societies, but with political societies. [AN HON. MEMBER: The Fawcett Association.] That is an association of Post Office servants which is in a totally different position from the trade union societies of the Post Office, and it is in a totally different position from the organisations to which the hon. Member who moved the Amendment referred. They are associations of Post Office servants to deal with Post Office questions, and I think that everyone will admit that they are in quite a different category from political associations, and accordingly they are entitled to recognition.

AN HON. MEMBER: Would they be entitled to affiliate themselves with organisations outside?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Some of these associations have been going on for twenty years and it has never been held that being solely associations of Post Office servants for Post Office questions, they should not be allowed to become affiliated with organisations outside. I mean with the Trade Union Congress and other associations of that sort.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS: What is the subscription?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I hope the hon. Gentleman will understand that I am not laying down rules and regulations out of my own head. I am endeavouring to deal with a matter which has always been dealt with by the Post Office and other Departments of the Civil Service which considered whether the State ought to interfere with the discretion of individuals and associations.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: I invite the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that this association contributed £53 10s. to the Labour Party. Does that involve the association as connected with a political party?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: What I say is that I do not propose to lay down the rule that subscriptions from individuals or associations in the Civil Service constitute in themselves any infringement of the rule against taking part in politics outside. Of course, a more difficult question is that to which reference has been made by the hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Vote, viz., the question of political societies or associations not for Post Office purposes, but for educational purposes inside the Post Office. I am not, as a rule, asked for permission for these associations to be formed, and when they are formed the only question that arises is whether or not they carry out the regulations of the Post Office. Anyone may form such an association in the Post Office, but they take the risk, if they break the regulations, of being brought under the disciplinary observation of their superior officer. The rule I have endeavoured to carry out in this matter is that a certain reserve in political matters should be observed. If these associations appear to me to be what they protess, and are carried on for educational purposes inside the Post Office, they are treated as non-political if they do not take an active part in politics, but carry out the regulations I have referred to. It appears to me that a pretty clear line can be drawn in this matter. If an association is merely a branch of an existing association outside and takes part in party politics, and cannot be dissociated from the parent body, and must therefore take an active part in party politics outside, it comes within the rule; but if the association is constituted for purposes inside the Post Office and exercises in the Post Office its functions with due discretion and does not take part in active party politics outside, it seems to me that a distinction can be drawn under the regulations, and as long as that association does not contravene the regulations I should propose that it be allowed to continue. I have laid down exactly the same rule for all associations, although the hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Vote did not think I had. It seems to be thought that I have dealt out a different measure to the Primrose League than to other associations. I was asked whether I would object to a branch of the Primrose League being formed in the Post Office. I pointed out that the league, being as I believed, a political organisation, it did not seem right that officers of the Post Office should take office under it, because by doing so they would be breaking the regulations. I understood that the habitation could not be formed without their taking office under the Primrose League. I am glad to think that those persons who are interested in the matter, recognising that by so doing they would be breaking the regulations, have done what I should have expected. They have formed inside the Post Office a constitutional society with a constitution which is, I believe, the constitution of the Primrose League. This body, however, is not connected with the Primrose League, and, therefore, it is not brought into contact with active party politics. So far as I am aware, the position is the same in the case of the Socialist organisation called the Pioneer League. That league was started before I came into office and I am not responsible for its creation, but the hon. Member has perhaps, hardly given a fair account of it. My attention was called to it after the House met, and on making inquiries I found that that particular league had been wound up, and that the members had joined another Socialist association within the Civil Service, the basis of which is found in the principles laid down in the 3rd Rule of that body, viz.:

> "The object of the society is to educate the members of the service in the principles of Socialism; political action is to be outside its province, and the general funds are not to be used for any other organisation."

AN HON. MEMBER (on the OPPOSITION Benches): They are.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It appeared to me under these circumstances that that association came within the interpretation which I have ventured to give to the regulations. Those who desired a habitation of the Primrose League have formed such an association and will be able to carry on their very excellent work within the Post Office. The Socialist League has come within the regulations and formed a self-supporting, independent body instead of the old society. The same principle has been followed in the case of the Free Trade League. As to the Tariff Reform League, I drew attention to the fact that it was affiliated outside, and I understand that the secretary has undertaken to lay the matter before the committee, and I expect from what the secretary has said that they also will bring themselves under the regulations. Therefore, whether hon. Members agree or not with me in the interpretation I have given to these rules, which are not very easy to interpret, I say I have dealt exactly in the same way with the Primrose League as with the Socialist League, the Free Trade League, and the Tariff Reform League. An hon. Member urged that I ought to have admitted the Primrose League at once, because it was not a political organisation taking an active part in party politics. I do not desire to discuss the constitution of the Primrose League, because hon. Members opposite know more about it than I do. However, on Saturday last, I was reading Sir H. Drummond Wolff's "Memoirs," in which I found the following passage which disposes of the allegation that the Primrose League is not a political organisation—

> "After leaving finally in 1881 we founded the Primrose League with the details of which I was concerned. In 1884 matters were sufficiently ripe to invite the co-operation of the two leaders in promoting the prospects of the Conservative Party. We offered Lord Salisbury, and Sir Stafford Northcote the highest offices in the league, and these offices were accepted."

That shows that those who founded the league intended it for the purpose of promoting the success of the Conservative Party, and yet hon. Members will say it is not an association which takes an active part in party politics! The hon. Member who spoke last alleged or insinuated that the constitution of the Socialist League, which provided that they would take no political action outside its province and that the general funds were not to be used for any other organisation, was a mere blind. The same might be said as true of the Constitutional Society, and that that society is also going to take a part in party politics.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): I ask why we should have unequal treatment.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have endeavoured to explain to the best of my ability that I have treated all the associations exactly in the same way, and that they have all brought themselves within the regulations. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What about the Primrose League?"] The Primrose League is a constitutional movement which exists in the Post Office at the present moment. They have chosen the right way to do it; they have brought themselves under the regulations, and I have treated them in exactly the same way as I have treated other organisations. I am prepared to believe that the Post Office servants in dealing with these matters are not putting before me mere paper constitutions or making use of their professions as a blind, but that they intend these societies to be genuinely what they profess to be, educating societies; but at the same time if in any particular case my attention is called to a breach of these regulations I shall not hesitate to take disciplinary action against any of these societies. I apologise to the Committee for detaining them so long, but I have had to explain all these matters more than once. I may have failed, but as far as I am concerned my object has been to do even-handed justice to all these associations, but they must conform to the rules and regulations of the Post Office and endeavour to carry them out.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): It gets more and more difficult as we go along to analyse the principles of the Postmaster-General's action, or indeed to discover if there are any underlying principles at all. The right hon. Gentleman claims that he has acted with justice and impartiality, but his action is so enshrouded and surrounded by a nebulous vapour of confused principles that it is almost impossible to discover if there is anything lying behind. The fact is, as I believe, that the right hon. Gentleman has got hopelessly away from the fundamental principles of the rules laid down by Mr. Gladstone. The groundwork of the fallacy of the right hon. Gentleman is to be found in the use of the words: "inside the Post Office." I do not believe that the old regulations were intended, or in the early stages had the effect, of permitting Post Office servants to use either Post Office organisation, or Post Office titles, or premises as a basis of political operations. There can be only two supreme tests. One is to ask what other use can the titles of Post Office Socialists, or Post Office Conservatives, or Post Office Primrose Leaguers have, except the purpose of getting that added prestige, that superior organisation, that higher power of raising subscriptions which possibly arises from the fact that the members meet constantly in the same place by virtue of their being employed in the same service. It is not for the benefit of the State that this should be permitted. The fullest liberty should be given to them off duty to organise themselves as private citizens as they think proper. I mentioned two tests. The other test is when individuals or associations begin to attempt to affect the composition of this House by promoting the return of a Member or a group of Members. It is idle for the right hon. Gentleman to maintain in these days that Socialism is not a political agitation. The mere fact that the Socialist Party and the Socialist propaganda are opposed to the two old Parties of the House makes it obvious that it is a political party on the same footing as other political parties, even if there were no other equally cogent reasons for seeing how its operations and aims stand in relation to those of the old political parties. I think I have indicated with much respect where the fallacy of the right hon. Gentleman lies, and I think all these political parties ought not to exist in the Post Office at all, and that the employees ought not to be allowed to do anything to use their official position to further their political ends.

*Mr. MADDISON (Burnley) considered that the right hon. Gentleman had disposed of any grievance hon. Gentlemen opposite might think they had in regard to partial treatment, as before the Postmaster-General spoke he thought that the Primrose League had been debarred while the Socialist League had been called into being. That, however, had not been the case, because the Primrose League now took the form of the Constitutional Association, but it seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman had reduced the whole thing to an absurdity. Here was the Primrose League wanting to get inside the Post Office. Why they should do so he did not know. They could not get in because they had a parent body outside, but the right hon. Gentleman helped them to get out of that: they became the Constitutional Association, and were doing exactly the same thing as the Primrose League. By some sort of metaphysics he could not understand they were to be allowed as a Constitutional Association to go on educating Post Office officials in Primrose League doctrines and the principles of Conservatism. How the right hon. Gentleman could go on telling the Committee that the Socialistic League was non-political he could not for the life of him understand. Its purpose was to educate. Was not that the purpose of all political organisations, although he was aware that some of them did a little more than that. What did they educate in? The economics of Socialism, which they could not separate from its politics. The proof of that was that when a certain comrade of theirs was returned as a revolutionary Socialist they at once sent him a congratulatory telegram, and he at once replied, and they subscribed to his election expenses. Was that education? Putting aside philanthropic and charitable organisations and trade unions as arguable from another standpoint—leaving them out of view altogether, he thought it was altogether against public policy to allow a political association or organisation to use the name of any Department of State in any form whatever. Let them suppose that this principle were applied to trading firms. They would have a Peter Robinson Primrose League, or a Whiteley Socialist League, or a Wallis Free Trade League, or a Marshall and Snelgrove Tariff Reform League. They did not expect a Government Department to be carried on on such business lines as private concerns, but still they thought a Government system should have some approximation to the methods of business men. He thought the right hon. Gentleman was getting himself more and more tied up every time he dealt with the subject, and the best, indeed the only way, was to clear out of the Post Office and every other Department, all political associations, whether they were Socialist, Primrose League, tariff reformers, young Liberals, or old Tories, or anything else. That would not interfere with individual liberty. There were many other associations—two of the best and gentlest men he ever met were philosophic anarchists who did everything by propaganda—which could come crowding in and say their objects were educational and not political and would equally send congratulatory telegrams to their colleagues on their return to Parliament.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said he was afraid the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken was one of those philanderers to which reference had been made. [Mr. Maddison: What is a philanderer?] He did not know, but the right hon. Gentleman had used the phrase in speaking on Saturday last. No one could complain that there was anything in the right hon. Gentleman's speech which was in the least unfair or to which anyone could object, but their argument was that either no organisations should be allowed in the Post Office, or they must have equal treatment. He rather dissented from the view of his hon. friend the Member for Sheffield in thinking that the Primrose League was not political. He dissented from his view; he thought that it was wholly party and political. But that was not the point. Let them say it was party and political; what was the Socialist League? Therefore they demanded equal treatment for any political league if it was allowed to exist inside the Post Office. They had not the least objection to the Pioneer Socialist League, because if they carried on their propaganda they would make more Conservatives in a month than they on that side could in a year; but if they were allowed to form associations in the Post Office the party on that side of the House should also have an equal right to do so. He was sure that not a single hon. Member opposite who listened to the speech of the Postmaster-General could tell the Committee what the right hon. Gentleman meant. He was quite at a loss to understand the distinction the right hon. Gentleman appeared to draw between a branch and an affiliation. It seemed to him to be a quibble. Here was the Pioneer Socialist League formed for the propagation of Socialist views, which had practically taken part in an election, and the right hon. Gentleman said that that was not political; whereas another of a similar character was said to be political. Here was this association which was political, and the right hon. Gentleman could not allow another association to be formed, because it was political. That was exactly how the position stood. The right hon. Gentleman had done nothing to show what was the difference between the two, and he thought it would be far better had he admitted that he had added another act of *gaucherie* to those which were committed by this Government every day.

MR. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate) said he could not refrain from responding to the challenge which had been thrown out by the noble Lord that nobody on that side of the House who had listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman could possibly understand what he meant. It seemed to him perfectly clear, though hon. Members opposite had entirely failed to catch the point which the right hon. Gentleman had again and again endeavoured to drive home. As far as he understood, the right hon. Gentleman desired to differentiate between general political associations which were well known throughout the country and leagues or associations formed inside the Post Office for propagating various principles. The right hon. Gentleman had also made it perfectly clear that the Pioneer Socialist League was simply an association within the Post Office itself, intended to propagate Socialist principles, and that under the rules previously laid down there was no reason to interfere with that society. He had shown himself perfectly willing to allow similar associations to propagate other principles. There was now formed within the Post Office an association which, though not a Habitation of the Primrose League, propagated the principles, such as they were, of the Primrose League, a Free Trade Association, and apparently a Tariff Reform Association, but not one of these associations had any direct connection or affilaition with outside bodies.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I have listened to the remarks of the last speaker, and I do not understand them at all. If that is the interpretation of the speech of my right hon. friend opposite there is not much to be said. I hope the Postmaster-General is going to say something more. The issue is a very clear one. As the hon. Member for Burnley put it, it is a question of excluding all political combinations in the Post Office, or allowing all of them. Will the right hon. Gentleman answer that? What does he propose to do? It appears to every Member of the Committee that the distinction he endeavoured to draw between the Primrose League and the other associations is too flimsy to be maintained for a moment. I am quite certain that he is not satisfied with it himself. It has been shown that all those other associations are, if not affiliated, in direct connection with outsiders. I am not blaming the Socialistic Party, but to say that they are not political is as absurd as to say that the Primrose League is not political. Of course they are. What else do they exist for? Are they to be a sort of debating society? They are political, and what we want to know from my right hon. friend is, is he prepared to mete out equal treatment to all? Is he prepared to admit them all or to forbid them all? My right hon. friend the Member for the Hallam Division put the matter very fairly when he said that the strength of these associations inside the Post Office is their governmental character. They are Post Office associations, and therefore have a value and power that they would not have if they were mere outsiders. Will my right hon. friend tell the Committee whether he is prepared to do away with all these associations inside the Post Office, which I think is the best plan, leaving them as individuals absolute freedom to do what they like outside their business hours, or if he is not prepared to do that, is he prepared to admit them all on equal terms? I am sure my right hon. friend is the last man in the House that we would like to worry in any way. I have always felt that he is so superior to us, that his political righteousness is a standing reflection to the ordinary Parliamentary sinner. But gold is not much use for everyday work unless it has a little alloy in it. Whenever I think of my right hon. friend I think of some lines by Mr. Seaman, the gifted editor of *Punch*, when speaking of another important character he said—

> "It is not given to everyone to be wise, but they should be good."

I hope my right hon. friend will not allow this debate to be of no service. If the matter rests where it is, the difficulty will be continued, and we shall have question after question addressed to him, whereas it lies in the right hon. Gentleman's power now to say in language which the Committee can understand and with which it will be satisfied: "I will abolish or forbid political associations inside the Post Office, as we should do in any mercantile or other business undertaking; or if I do permit one I will permit all, and treat them all alike." If my right hon. friend will in a few words, without mixing it up with all the verbiage of which he is somewhat a master, say one of these two things, he would settle the question for all time. I believe the abolition of all these associations inside the Post Office would be the best solution of all. If the members of the Post Office want to engage in party politics they have perfect freedom to do so, but not to take the prestige of a great public department to back them up. If the right hon. Gentleman would do that he would save himself a great deal of trouble, he would lay down the principles of Post Office management on the only true lines, and he would settle this question altogether.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: After the very kindly appeal of my right hon. friend the Committee will let me say one or two words in reply. I can assure my right hon. friend that I had no desire in what I said before by verbiage to cover the point. I made it perfectly clear that as far as I am concerned I have endeavoured and shall certainly in the future endeavour to treat all those associations on identically the same terms. The right hon. Gentleman asked me whether I would either prohibit them all or admit them on the same terms. I said in my speech that I do not think these associations when they are carried on on proper lines make for harm. I think on the whole they make for good. After all, these Post Office servants have votes, and I do not see why they should not be encouraged to discuss political matters from an educational point of view as Post Office servants and to form associations amongst themselves. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think they do it in Post Office time. They do not. If they did that they would not remain long as Post Office servants. But meeting together day by day, I do not think it is unnatural that they should desire to form associations of this kind, and I for one do not think them harmful. Therefore, I am not disposed to prohibit them, especially as, after all, I have not been the first to admit them. They have been there a good many years, and it would be a totally new departure for the Civil Service to prohibit them. It has been my intention to maintain absolute equality, and I desire with regard to this matter that the Postmaster-General should know no politics whatever. I have not said one is more political than another. I have said they must all come under the regulations which say they must maintain a certain reserve in political matters, and I judge each case on its merits. If my attention is called to a breach of these regulations I can assure my right hon. friend I will carry them out with full impartiality. I hope I have answered the question as kindly and as shortly as possible.

MR. STANLEY WILSON said he could not help feeling astonished at the speech made by the Postmaster-General. The right hon. Gentleman kept reiterating that he was endeavouring to treat the question with impartiality, and yet he absolutely refused to do so. What they should do now would be to demand that he either withdrew the restrictions he had placed on the Primrose League or exclude every other sort of political organisation from the Post Office.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Have I imposed on the Primrose League any restrictions not imposed on any other organisation?

MR. STANLEY WILSON said that the right hon. Gentleman had allowed two associations in the Post Office which were affiliated to a political party. He had told them that the Fawcett Association took no part in political discussions of any sort, but he had a copy of the *Post*, the organ of the Fawcett Association, which, he had no doubt, was known to the right hon. Gentleman. He found that the association sent to the National Conference at Hull delegates from the Post Office. That must show that it was distinctly affiliated to the Labour Party. There was a report in the paper, signed by the delegates who went to the Conference, and with the permission of the Committee he would read their concluding remarks. They said—

> "We strongly recommend adhesion to the Labour Party as the one to which we can as a right look for help when needed. Its record is one to be proud of, and it will undoubtedly do much to improve the condition of the workers in the days to come, and in that improvement we will share if only we maintain our right to a voice and a vote in the policy of the party."

Could the right hon. Gentleman therefore tell them that the Fawcett Association took no part in political discussions of any sort? They demanded either the withdrawal of the restrictions imposed on the Primrose League, or the exclusion of the organisations which existed at the present time. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman mete out the same treatment to them all? He did not know whether he would be in order in saying: "Let them all come." Let the Socialist League, the Primrose League, the Free Trade League, and the Tariff Reform League have equal rights and privileges. That was their demand and that was what they asked the right hon. Gentleman to do.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said that he would not have intervened in the debate only he thought, as a Civil servant for some thirty-five years, he had a right to speak on this matter. He would not, however, detain the Committee more than a few moments. It was perfectly well known in the Civil Service that any one whose opinion had any weight was strictly precluded from taking part in political life. For thirty-five years he himself never gave a vote, and never took any part in any political organisation, and never attended any political meetings. Anyone knew that a person occupying a responsible position in the Civil Service would not be allowed to take such a part. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the same rule applied to every public office. He distinctly traversed that statement. In not a single public office, except that over which the right hon. Gentleman presided would such organisations be permitted. What would have happened if the Education Office, to which he belonged, had had a Primrose League, a Socialist League, a Tariff Reform League, and a Free Trade League?

The thing would have been stamped out at once, and rightly so. Everybody knew that the Post Office stood on a totally different footing from any other Public Department in the State. It was the largest employer of labour in the country, and what could interfere more with the administration of the Post Office and with the rights of the taxpayers as compared with the employees of the Post Office than the existence of an organisation which was in strict alliance with the Labour Party below the gangway? They said boldly that that was the reason for the preference given by the right hon. Gentleman. It was only in that office that these societies were allowed to exist. Everybody knew what was the aim of the Labour League, and that it would increase the burden upon the taxpayers. Everybody knew that the right hon. Gentleman himself had been compelled to yield to the demands the Labour leaders had forced upon him. It was for that reason that they declined to accept the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman. He asked him to exclude from the Post Office as from every other office under the Crown these political organisations of whatever colour. He was perfectly certain that the concession, defended in whatever specious phraseology, was chiefly made in the interests of the Socialist League, which was really in alliance with the Labour League, which was prepared to fight the right hon. Gentleman when he stood up for the interests of the taxpayers.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 63; Noes, 206. (Division List, No. 44.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,Rt Hn.SirAlex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie,H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cavendish,Rt.Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings,Rt.Hn.J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down,North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway,Rt.Hn. Sir John H.
Keswick, William
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Nicholson,Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield,SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool, Walton
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker,Col.W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Samuel Roberts and Earl Winterton.

NOES.

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen,A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Beale, W. P.
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner,J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,RtHn.Richard Knight

Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H (St. Pancras, N.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mooney, J. J.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Tomkinson, James
Verney, F. W.
Waldron, Laurence Ambrose
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again to-morrow.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ADMISSION OF THE PRESS) BILL.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 17*th March*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed; The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered (according to order), and agreed to.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Public elementary schools in "single school parishes" as defined in Section 3 (6) of the Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill, 1908.

INDIA (LAND REVENUE).

Land revenue assessments in the Punjab since 1855.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COUNTY COURTS.

Rules, 1908; Memorandum respecting.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

Rules, 1908, with Memorandum.

LOCAL LOANS FUND (ACCOUNTS, 1906–1907).

Accounts of receipts and payments by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in respect of the capital and income of the Local Loans Fund, for the year ended 31st March, 1907; together with a Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ISLAND OF VATERSAY.

Return of correspondence respecting

Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of 6th February last), and to be printed. [No. 30.]

SUNDAY CLOSING (SHOPS) BILL. [H.L.]

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, as this subject has been several times before your Lordships it will not be necessary for me to trouble the House at any length. The Bill was originally brought in at the urgent request of the shopkeepers themselves. It was referred to a Committee, which reported strongly in its favour. The Report said—

> "The Committee are convinced by the evidence that Sunday trading is on the increase; that the Bill is urgently needed; that it is desired by the shopkeeping interests, and would inflict no serious hardship on the poorer classes; that it would be a great benefit to the country generally, and that it commends itself both to the reason and the conscience of the community."

The following year I brought in a Resolution stating—

> "That in the opinion of this House the question of the Sunday opening of shops demands the serious and early attention of His Majesty's Government."

This was unanimously adopted, and a Joint Committee of both Houses was appointed. This Committee also was strongly in favour of legislation. They pointed out that the present state of the law was unsatisfactory and unjust. and they said—

> "The Committee recommend strongly that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increasing feeling against Sunday trading."

Under these circumstances, we were disappointed last year that Sunday trading was omitted from the list of subjects on which the Government proposed legislation. We then proposed another and stronger Resolution—

> "That this House reiterates its opinion that the subject of Sunday trading requires the serious and earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, and urges them to legislate in accordance with the unanimous reports of the Committees of 1905 and 1906."

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

This, also, your Lordships agreed to unanimously, but my noble friend the Lord President of the Council spoke very unsympathetically, and frankly admitted that the Government were not disposed to move in the matter. However, we hoped against hope, but as it is evident that the Government will do nothing, we have re-introduced our Bill. It is in the form adopted by the Committee of 1905, with one or two small Amendments suggested by the Committee of 1906. Every provision in it has been approved by that Committee also, though the Bill does not in some respects go so far as they recommended.

Now, my Lords, what are the provisions of the Bill? It does not in one sense propose to alter the law of the land as regards Sunday trading, except in detail. Sunday trading is already illegal, but the law is inoperative because the fine is too small. We propose to raise it to the amount approved by Parliament in the case of the Early Closing Bill. The shopkeepers, however, feel, and both Parliamentary Committees agreed, that if the law is to be made operative, certain exemptions are necessary. The main exemptions are refreshments, medicines, milk and cream, newspapers, tobacco in the hours during which public-houses are open, and for the morning hours bread, fish, vegetables, fruit, and cooked meat. In considering a Bill of this character we must have regard to the wishes and feelings of shopkeepers and of customers, especially the poorer customers. Now, as regards shopkeepers, the Bill is supported by all the important trades. The Report of the Committee comprises a list of 350 associations which support the Bill, and the number is now larger. Not a single association of shopkeepers desired to give evidence against the Bill, and I do not know of any by whom it is opposed. This is surely a most remarkable concensus of opinion, and having now been for over thirty years in close touch with the shopkeeping community I may assure your Lordships that there is nothing about which they are more unanimous or more determined. I see that Mr. Stacey, the energetic secretary of the Early Closing Association, in a letter in yesterday's Press, even goes so far as to say that the shopkeepers, including the small shopkeepers, are practically unanimous in its favour. I must not omit to mention the shop assistants. They naturally feel very strongly on the subject, and surely they are entitled to their Sunday's rest.

Now I come to the customers, and here I think we may fairly take the trade councils and trade unions as representing the views of working men. The Committee give a striking list of about 200 trade councils and trade unions who support the shops in this demand. As representing public opinion, I may also refer to the views of municipalities. Resolutions in favour of the Sunday closing of shops have been passed by the corporations of Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Swansea, Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Dundee, Aberdeen, and over fifty other cities and boroughs, and by the executive council of the Urban District Councils Association, representing no less than 490 urban districts. Finally, a few days ago (5th March), at a meeting of the London borough councils, convened expressly to consider the question of shop hours, a resolution was passed, one clause of which was that shops should be shut all day on Sunday. I must frankly admit that the case of the Jews presents some difficulties, and I will at this stage only say that, while ready to meet them as far as possible, the view of shopkeepers is that if Jews come to live in a Christian country they should conform to the law of the land. We are most anxious, however, to meet the views of the Jews as far as possible. The Committee recommended that certain areas where the Jews have special markets might be scheduled, and we are quite prepared to accept such a clause. This, however, is a matter for Committee. I ought also, perhaps, to mention that some of the costermongers in the East of London, though not, I believe, in any other city, are opposed to any curtailment of Sunday trading. I believe, however, that the Bill has been misrepresented to them. The Joint Committee, in their Report, said that they were—

"Of opinion that the greater part of the opposition is based on a misapprehension. Under the exemptions provided in the Sunday

Closing (Shops) Bill of 1905, which the Committee have in the main adopted, they consider that no serious inconvenience could be caused."

In conclusion, I cannot more strongly commend this Bill to your Lordships than by reading a few short paragraphs from the Report of the Joint Committee of 1906. They said—

> "They are satisfied of the great importance of maintaining the Sunday as a day or rest not only on religious and moral grounds, but also as necessary to the preservation of the health and strength of the community . . . . Though the Committee had no doubt as to the importance of the Sunday rest from the point of view of health, they thought it well to consult the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Richard Douglas Powell, who was good enough to come and express his opinion, which he said was that of the whole medical profession, that 'there cannot be the least doubt of the importance of one clear day's rest in seven.' The Committee do not consider that the words of any particular Bill come within their terms of reference, but they recommend strongly that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increasing feeling against Sunday trading in this country."

The religious aspect of the question has several times been urged, with his usual force and lucidity, by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. If I do not refer to it, it is not because I undervalue this aspect of the case, but because I can leave it in abler hands. My Lords, in conclusion, on behalf of the shopkeeping community I most earnestly commend this Bill to your favourable consideration and trust you will give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

*LORD SWAYTHLING: My Lords, I ask for your indulgence while I say a few words respecting this Bill. I feel sure that the noble Lord who introduced it is actuated solely with a desire to benefit the people of this country by assuring that every one should have a weekly day of rest. But, unfortunately, if this Bill should pass into law in its present shape it would inflict immense hardship upon many thousands of the poorer working classes in my community. I feel justified in speaking on behalf of those living in East London, because I have worked among them for over fifty years. I have represented a constituency in East London for fifteen years, and am now for the twentieth year acting president of a federation of forty-three congregations comprising 30,000 souls. They are about half the number of Jews in East London; I estimate the total number at about 70,000. Of these, the majority would be seriously affected by this Bill. They observe the seventh day Sabbath of the Decalogue, as did their fathers and ancestors for thousands of years. They, therefore, cease working on fifty-two Saturdays in the year, besides thirteen festivals; and if by this Bill they are compelled to close their shops and stalls on fifty-two Sundays, that will make 117 days in the year on which they will not be able to trade. Such a restrictive measure would ruin thousands, and throw them upon the rates, and if they were tempted to sacrifice their Sabbath they would deteriorate morally and swell the number, probably, of atheists, and even of anarchists. The Committee which considered this question in 1906, unanimously resolved to add the following paragraph to their Report—

> "Lastly the Committee must draw attention to the case of the Jews, with whom they have much sympathy. They would be glad if a compromise could be found that would satisfy the Jewish community. The Committee have been informed that any measure will be opposed which does not expressly permit those Jews who close on Saturday to open on Sunday. Such an arrangement, on the other hand, would probably be opposed by the shop-keeping community as a whole, and the Committee cannot recommend it. The Committee, however, realise that in the large cities there are to be found areas which are inhabited mainly by Jews. In those areas certain markets have grown up in which a large business is transacted on Sunday. The Committee are of opinion that these areas might be scheduled in any Act permitting any Jew who closes his shop and does not trade on Saturday to trade in these areas until midday on Sunday. The Committee recommend that, if the Jewish community desire it, permission should be given for the sale of kosher meat and Jewish bread up to midday on Sunday."

The only argument of importance which I have heard in opposition to that recommendation of the Committee is that the Jews should not have any special legislation. It is said that since they come here they must abide by the laws of the majority. I would point out, in reply, that there already exists special legislation in favour of the Jews in the Factory and Workshop Act of 1878, re-enacted in 1901. I quite agree that everybody in this country must abide by the laws, but when new laws are proposed which are injurious to them and restrict the freedom which they generally enjoy it is the duty of their defenders to oppose them. The bulk of these Jews are Russian refugees, and it is hardly sympathetic to say that they come here. They are driven here by the murderous cruelties of the Russian Black Hundred, who murder, and incite to murder, men, women, and even little children, and are not themselves punished for their acts. The majority of these Jews have been obliged to flee to civilised countries like this, where they hope to have their life and property safe. They wish to work in peace; and if the provisions of the Factory and Workshops Act of 1878 were extended to shops and stalls, I myself should be perfectly satisfied.

I will only refer to one item in the Schedule of this Bill. While bread, fish, and cooked meat may be sold for a short time on Sundays, raw meat is not included. I should like to ask the noble Lord why it is that, in spite of the recommendation of the Committee, that concession has not been granted? This restriction would fall heavily on Jewish butchers in hot weather and when a festival occurs on a Friday or a Monday. They could not keep meat so long, and the poor people would be prevented from buying the scraps and offal which they consume, being unable to afford the expensive joints. Moreover, other than Jews protest against the Bill in its present shape. There are about 4,000 Mahomedans living in this country and 5,000 Mahomedan visitors come here annually, and I know from official sources that this Bill is strongly condemned by them. It is stated that such an interference with Mahomedans as this Bill involves, would be resented by Mahomedan British subjects, whose numbers exceed those of Christian British subjects. If these shops were closed they would not be able to buy kosher meat, the only meat that strict Mahomedans will eat in this country. I trust your Lordships will let this Bill meet with the same fate as the Bill of three years ago. My people want to be let alone. Their Sunday trading is largely in food, and is carried on mainly with their own people. It has been well said that you cannot make people religious by Act of Parliament, but you can make them irreligious by Act of Parliament if you create fresh obstacles in the way of religious people keeping their Sabbath and other religious observances. I leave the matter to the humanity of your Lordships' House, and I hope the Bill will not pass in its present shape.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I feel I almost owe an apology to the House for intruding again on this subject. Every year for a good many years past I have been privileged to say a few words respecting it, and while I feel that your Lordships listen sympathetically to the noble Lord who is so honourably identified with this work as year by year he renews his endeavour to get this Bill passed into law, you may not feel the same with regard to those who year after year speak in support of it. For, indeed, there is practically nothing new to be said on the subject. We have all the facts before us, and what we venture to complain of is that those who desire to postpone legislation, adduce, not arguments in opposition, but pleas simply for delay.

One Committee after another has during the last few years considered the subject, and the Joint-Committee which sat two years ago presented an exceedingly weighty report to your Lordships. I venture to think very scant justice has been done to the immense labour which that Joint-Committee bestowed upon it. I was not a member of that Committee and therefore can speak with freedom as to the merit which attaches to the work the Committee did. Last year no Bill was introduced, but my noble friend brought forward a Resolution in favour of such legislation as that which this year we are invited once more to undertake. Your Lordships will remember that those of us who are in favour of it, and I think the House generally, felt some little disappointment on the former occasion at what was said by my noble friend Lord Beauchamp, who spoke on behalf of the Government then as I gather he will speak to-night, and whose words in this House on behalf of the Government contrasted somewhat markedly with the Amendment he had himself proposed in the Committee.

Not only have this Bill and Resolutions respecting it been again and again before the country, but during the last two or three years there has been a remarkable awakening on the whole subject of Sunday observance. The movement has been supported, not only from the religious standpoint, though from there it took its start, but by medical authorities, commercial authorities, and by those who represent the Labour section of the community in almost every large town in England and Wales, there being a widespread apprehension on the part of the working classes and others that they are in danger of losing their day of rest and, where this is desired, of worship. Lord Avebury has again pointed out how all those to whom we have a right to look for evidence on this subject have been practically unamious in support of some such measure as that which is now again before your Lordships. The Shopkeepers' Associations all over the land support it; the municipal authorities, who, as my noble friend says, are most unwilling generally to take action in a matter of this kind which is more or less controversial, have found public opinion to be so strong in their boroughs that they have thrown themselves into the ranks of those who are supporting this legislation; and now the municipal councils of London, following what has been done in the country, support the proposal.

On the other side we have, it is true, some objection on the part of the costermongers and of a few associations such as the Society of Operative Printers, who have circulated to your Lordships a document which is a remarkable example of how a man honestly desiring to put a case before the public may misunderstand the matter in such a way as to render his manifesto practically worthless. This document rests on a basis of supposed fact, which is directly contradicted by the Bill itself, by the Reports of Committees on which the Bill is founded, and by the evidence which has been adduced year by year in the speeches of Lord Avebury and others. There are, and always have been, three classes for whose interests the opponents of legislation of this kind ask consideration—the small consumer, the small trader, and the Jewish community. Every one of these cases has been most carefully considered in the Report which has been long in your Lordships' hands, and the objections are met in the Bill now before us.

As regards the consumers, it is almost impossible, as we have again and again said, to get conclusive evidence from any representative spokesmen or spokeswomen, because nobody is formally authorised, so to speak, but anyone who will look at the endeavours which have been made by successive Committees to obtain evidence from the kind of people who are supposed to be treated harshly by legislation of this kind will see that the matter has been gone into to the very bottom, and that it is really a baseless proposition that there is a widespread feeling of objection to this legislation among those who represent small consumers. Witnesses have spoken on behalf of those trade unionists or their families who are the consumers affected, and such witnesses are practically unanimous in saying that the objections are fanciful and unreal. As to the small traders, the noble Lord has often pointed out that the associations which have spoken with practical unanimity up and down the country consist very largely of small traders, and that no delusion can be greater than that which represents this proposal as being made on behalf of large tradesmen as against small tradesmen.

Then with regard to that portion of the community for whom Lord Swaythling has just spoken, the Committee which has tried to deal with this matter has expressed a desire that such objections to legislation as are found to be real on the part of that community should be dealt with respectfully, carefully, and generously. But I think we have a right to say that we must not, in legislation of this kind concerning the people as a whole, be too much regulated and influenced by consideration of the wishes and scruples of those who must, after all, be a very small minority of the people of the land taken generally. Mahomedans have been mentioned by the noble Lord. But we are not making new legislation in a new spirit; we are making old legislation practical; and the question of how a general law will affect the position of an infinitesimal minority of the population is hardly the kind of argument that can be regarded as conclusive when we are dealing with the general well-being of a Christian nation. The community at large has spoken with no uncertain voice on this subject, and while we will take the greatest care to consider any Amendment or suggestions for improving the provisions relating to the Jewish community, I hope we shall consider the interests of the people at large as over-riding even some objection felt by so important a section of the population.

The exemptions allowed in the Schedule—exemptions which are capable of being enlarged, but are in my opinion ample as they stand—at all events show what care has been taken to find out where the shoe pinched and to prevent it pinching if that were possible. If one sees what takes place in some of the Sunday markets in our great cities, it is impossible to say that the majority of the things sold are things which it is necessary to sell on Sunday. A large proportion of the merchandise is crockery, second-hand clothing, singing birds, and growing plants. There is no attempt to show, at any rate on any large scale, that the purchaser of these things is unable to go for them on any other day. Where this could be shown we have tried to meet the difficulty by special provisions in the Bills which have been successively brought forward. I think the reality of the need for the Bill amply proved. The evil with which it deals is increasing, and I hope the House will not again be told that it is impossible to proceed in the matter, and that further consideration is required. The subject has now received the fullest consideration, and nothing is to be gained by delay.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, like the most rev. Primate, I feel that I owe your Lordships an apology for speaking again upon this subject, for I am afraid that during the course of the last two or three years I have spoken not a few times with regard to it. To-night I shall add very little. Although I have sometimes differed from my noble friend Lord Avebury, with regard to the details of his proposal, I have always thought that in principle he had a very strong case. I think so now, and if he goes to a division I shall certainly follow him into the lobby.

What I may call the Second Reading position is really a very simple one. The practice of Sunday trading is already illegal under the laws of this country; but, as we all know, owing to certain inadequacies in those laws they are constantly defied. Then there is no doubt that the practice of Sunday trading tends to increase. The evidence upon that point is, I think, overwhelming. Another matter which I think should weigh with your Lordships is this, that this is not a case in which you can look to public opinion to redress the evil. As we all know, if a single man persists in the practice of Sunday trading, he virtually forces the hand of all other traders in the neighbourhood. There seems to me, therefore, to be a very strong case for the intervention of the Legislature.

As to the history of the matter, we have the fact that in 1905 a Select Committee of this House reported in favour of my noble friend's Bill. In 1906, your Lordships, on my noble friend's Motion, referred the subject to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament, and that Committee reported in favour of the Bill presented in the previous year. Last year we carried a Resolution proposed by my noble friend in the same direction. Therefore, so far as this House is concerned, we are very strongly committed to the principle of this proposal. My noble friend has brought evidence to show that it has the support of an immense body of the shopkeepers of this country. He is supported by the trade unions and trade councils, which we may surely take as authoritative exponents of the views of the working classes. He has the support of a number of very important local bodies and corporations, and, as I said a moment ago, he has the support of this House so far as its recorded votes are concerned during the last three years. It seems to me that if ever what I may call a Second Reading case was established, my noble friend has established it this evening.

It is quite true that any legislation of this kind is almost sure to occasion hardship in some directions, but it does seem to me that we have to consider the balance of advantage and disadvantage, and that we ought not to be deterred from carrying out an improvement in the law which will give infinite relief to many thousands of the people of this country, merely because certain smaller classes of the community may be to some extent inconvenienced. In Committee we shall be able to consider whether there are any cases of hardship not provided for in the exemptions already specified. We have it from my noble friend Lord Avebury, and from the most rev. Primate that if any such hardships are found to remain, they will gladly entertain Amendments for meeting them. For these reasons I hope your Lordships will give a Second Reading to the Bill, reserving to yourselves, of course, the right to modify it, should it be shown to require modification, in Committee.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, I do not think the noble Lord who introduced this Bill will have had any illusion as to the answer he is likely to receive from His Majesty's Government. The Home Secretary, both by letter and in answer to a Question in another place, has stated that it is quite impossible for His Majesty's Government to deal with the question during the present session, and that they are even unable to take up a private Member's Bill on the subject. Therefore this afternoon, although His Majesty's Government do not propose to offer opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill, I must warn the noble Lord that in the circumstances they do not view that proceeding with any enthusiasm.

I think it is only fair to your Lordships to point out that the matter is not quite so simple as it seems at first sight. There is an increasing number of people who wish to see a Bill passed to secure, not the Sunday rest, but the principle of one day's rest in seven, leaving it to the individual to choose the day most suitable. That has some merits, such as solving the difficulty of railway travelling and matters of that kind. There are a large number of Sabbatarians who regard this Bill as not going far enough and allowing a great deal more trading on the Sunday than in their opinion is really necessary. But there is, as I have said, an increasing body of opinion among the working classes in favour of following the example of French legislation, and of enacting one day's rest in seven rather than of insisting on the particular day of rest being Sunday.

Then there is the method of carrying out the principle of the Bill, as to which everybody is not yet agreed. The method of the Bill is to exempt a number of trades from its operation; but I would remind your Lordships that the present Act of Charles II. will remain in force, and I am not sure that if we put this Bill on the top of it we shall not to some extent make the confusion of the law worse than it is at present. On the last occasion when we discussed this question we had a Motion before us, which is a very different thing from a concrete Bill. The noble Marquess who has just sat down spoke, as he reminded your Lordships, in 1905 on this measure, and as a sincere admirer of the noble Marquess I hope I may be allowed to quote part of what he said to your Lordships on that occasion. This Bill is substantially the same Bill as that which was before your Lordships in 1905. That Bill received some condemnation from the noble and learned Earl who was then on the Woolsack, but the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition said—

> "I cannot help thinking that that section (Clause 6) will place the Home Secretary in a very invidious position, and one in which no Minister should be placed."

He spoke of the Bill as a piece of not very successful patchwork, and he also said that the result of its passing would be to produce not a few ambiguities and inconsistencies. He said he regarded the Bill as still open to very serious objections, and would regret to see it become law. That is the Bill which your Lordships are asked this afternoon to read a second time.

*The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: There have been two Committees since then.

Earl BEAUCHAMP: That is true, but those Committees have not incorporated any substantial alterations. It is practically the Bill of 1905 which the noble Lord now asks your Lordships to read a second time. The most rev. Primate made a reference to myself, the same reference as he made last year. He was tempted, I think, by the success which it met with on that occasion, to repeat it. He spoke then as he spoke to-night of a difference between the language I held in this House and the language I held as a member of the Committee. If the most rev. Primate had pursued his study of the Report a little further he would have seen that the clause which was inserted on my Motion was a very different one from the original moved by Lord Avebury. That clause read—

> "The Committee desire to express their entire concurrence with the opinion expressed by the Committee of last year that Sunday trading is on the increase, and that the Bill is urgently needed."

The words which were substituted expressly excluded the use of the word "urgently," and were very much milder in form than the original draft. I am glad to have had this opportunity of explaining to your Lordships that there is not that seeming inconsistency in my views which the most rev. Primate would have you believe. May I also say this to the most rev. Primate, that I think he is very optimistic in taking the view that the Jewish objections have been met by the provisions in this Bill. We have heard from Lord Swaythling that he would be very glad if your Lordships would decline to read the Bill a second time.

Lord SWAYTHLING: I said I hoped your Lordships would not pass it in its present shape.

Earl BEAUCHAMP: There is no doubt of this, that the various objections which were laid before us by members of the Jewish faith have not been met, or, at any rate, have not been satisfactorily met, by the provisions of this Bill. Then this legitimate criticism, at any rate, may be passed on the Bill, that it leaves the Act of Charles II. in force, and it is possible that, although certain trades are excluded from the Bill, penalties will still be applied for under the old Act. That seems to me a grave and serious objection. I can assure your Lordships that, I think in common with most Members of your Lordships' House, I should be very willing indeed if, by common agreement of all parties and of all religions, some method could be found of dealing with this question, which would be entirely satisfactory to all by securing, if not Sunday, at any rate one day's rest in seven.

The Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND: Yes, I suppose we should all be very glad if all parties and all religions could agree about anything. I do not think the noble Earl's assurance at the conclusion of his speech is very satisfactory. I did not intend to speak on this Bill, for the very good reason that I have spoken so often upon it, but I cannot refrain from saying that, having myself served on both Committees, I share entirely the surprise of the most rev. Primate at the entire change of attitude which the noble Earl has assumed in this House from that which he adopted on the Committee. It is perfectly true that the noble Earl suggested several amendments, but I thought this was done so that we might arrive at some common ground in favour of the Bill. I did not imagine that it was done by a member of the Committee who in this House was coming forward as an entire opponent of the Bill in all forms and shapes, unless every single soul and every religious body in the country came to an agreement upon it.

I am still more surprised at the statement which the noble Earl has thought it his duty to make without the slightest corroboration or support of any kind. He tells us that there is a growing feeling in this country in favour of the enactment of one day's rest in seven instead of maintaining the Sunday. What is his ground for making that statement? No such statement has ever been made before a Committee. I remember a member of the Committee suggesting to a witness whether he did not think that would be a solution of the difficulty, and, as is generally the case when a question of that kind is put, the witness scratched his head and said it might be. But I have never heard the smallest evidence of a general wish in that direction, though I have received a great many communications and suggestions from various people on this subject.. With all due respect to the noble Earl, until he can bring forward some proof of his statement I must believe that he is labouring under some misapprehension.

With regard to the case of the Jews, we all admit that that is a great difficulty. I think I may claim for myself that I did what I could on the Committee to obtain for the Jews a perfectly fair hearing, and every consideration. I do not deny the difficulty, and should the Bill go into Committee I would be ready to do all I could to meet them. But I do not think that a great and growing evil should be allowed to continue throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, merely because it may be difficult to meet the position of one small section in the country. I therefore hope your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, it is quite true, as the noble Earl opposite has said, that he moved in the Committee to omit some words which, as Chairman, I had suggested, and to insert other words. But what were the words which he proposed and which I accepted? They ran—

> "The Committee do not consider that the wording of any particular Bill comes within the terms of reference, but they strongly recommend that legislation, subject to such modifications in the existing law as may be necessary, should be initiated in general accordance with the increased feeling against Sunday trading in this country."

I did not think it advisable to stand by particular words. It is a great thing to have a Committee unanimous, and the noble Lord's words gave us substantially what we wanted. I think your Lordships will agree that it was wise to accept the words proposed by my noble friend opposite. I entirely concur with what has just been said by the noble Duke. We did not find that there was any feeling in the country in favour of one day's rest in seven apart from Sunday. The noble Lord said that the provisions of the Bill would press severely on the trades included. But the trades included are most anxious for the Bill. With regard to the Jews, it must not be forgotten that they are allowed to open their shops on Saturdays after sunset, when the best trade is done. I am asked why we precluded the sale of raw meat. That was done at the earnest desire of the butchers' associations themselves; but that, of course, would be a matter for consideration in Committee. I particularly stated, in moving the Second Reading, that there was every desire on our part to meet the wishes of the Jewish community, and that Amendments in Committee, in so far as they do not affect the principle of the Bill, will have full consideration. We have every desire to meet their views without sacrificing the Sunday rest of shopkeepers generally.

On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday, the 26th instant.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [H.L.]

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, this is simply a Consolidation Bill, and I believe I can confidently and with perfect truth assure the House that it contains no new matter whatever. I therefore trust your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, I hope the House will give this Bill a Second Reading. We are greatly indebted to my noble friend for having brought it in, for a Consolidation Bill has been wanted for a long time past.

I believe the noble Earl hopes that in that distant day, as we all trust it will be, when his tombstone comes to be engraved, it will have upon it something about farmers' charters and the regeneration of the land; but I am not at all sure that the greatest memorial to his tenure of office will not be the consolidation of the various Acts of Parliament dealing with agricultural holdings. I hope the noble Earl will not ask us to take the next stage of the Bill without a sufficient interval. That remark also applies to the next Bill on the Paper—the Small Holdings and Allotments Bill. It is most desirable that those parts of these Acts with which county councils and valuers have most to do should be grouped together in such a manner that they can be easily dealt with. I shall, at the proper time, be able to show to the noble Earl that there might be a convenient regrouping of some of the clauses of the Bill which would make them more easily administered. Certain doubts have arisen in reference to this subject which may possibly be set at rest by a slight alteration in the order of clauses, and I think there are some cases in which parts of Acts other than those which these Bills propose to consolidate have been introduced. It may be desirable for the sake of clearness that these should be incorporated in the Bill. But I hope that neither the noble Earl nor any other Member of your Lordships' House, will strive to insert in these Bills, which are purely Consolidation Bills, any new matter or any alteration of the law, however desirable, in our opinion, that alteration might be. I am quite certain that to do so would lead to great difficulty in getting the Bill through Parliament. I hope the noble Earl will resist any attempt at amendments in that direction, and I can assure him that he will have my support.

On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Onslow.

EARL CARRINGTON: This is simply a Consolidation Bill on the same lines as the Bill to which your Lordships have just given a Second Reading; and I take this opportunity of thanking my noble friend for the support he has promised to give His Majesty's Government in the passing of these two Bills. Of course, I am entirely in the hands of the House. I would most earnestly endorse the hope of my noble friend that no new matter will be introduced into these Bills, as that would be absolutely fatal to their passing. I trust my noble friend will expedite any improvements he may think fit to suggest, as these Bills are really necessary, and it is of the greatest importance that they should be passed into law at the earliest possible moment.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—*(Earl Carrington.)*

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: Perhaps the noble Earl will allow me to communicate with him as to the date on which the next stage should be taken.

EARL CARRINGTON nodded assent.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, before the Second Reading is agreed to I should like to take the opportunity of thanking the noble Earl for introducing a Bill consolidating the enactments with respect to small holdings and allotments. This is a matter which was pressed on the Government by the County Councils Association, and it will be of great advantage to those who have to administer the Acts to have them consolidated in one measure. There is one point to which I should like to call attention, and, although it is a drafting Amendment, I think it is one of some importance. The House may remember that when the Small Holdings Bill was in Committee I called attention to the fact that, although the county council was the initiatory authority for bringing the Act into force, its name did not appear at all until you got a considerable way down the Bill—namely, to Clause 3; and it was only then introduced by an Amendment giving county councils power to make a scheme. I criticised that because it seemed to me that when you were passing a Bill which was given in charge of the county councils, it was an extraordinary way to draft the Bill to start off with the Commissioners who were to force the county councils, in case they did not do their duty, while the county councils themselves were not mentioned at all except in a sub-section half-way down the Bill. It was only in that way that we found out that they were the authority who had to deal with the Act. I only refer to it now because I have to thank the noble Earl for making an alteration which puts the county council in its proper position in regard to the Act. The first clause now provides that the county councils may, if they are of opinion that there is a demand for small holdings, put the Act in operation. Although only a drafting Amendment, I think in the circumstances it is one which I have been justified in detaining the House in alluding to, especially as it was a point to which attention was called at the time. By this Consolidation Bill the matter is now made perfectly clear.

On Question, agreed to. Bill read 2ª accordingly and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

MOTOR CAR LEGISLATION.

Lord MONTAGU of BEAULIEU, in asking whether His Majesty's Government would, in considering any further legislation or taxation relating to motor cars, bear in mind the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Motor Cars and the Royal Commission on London Traffic, and take such steps as may be necessary to create a national road authority, by whom the main roads of this country should be managed, said, My Lords, I am asking His Majesty's Government this afternoon the Question which is in my name on the Paper, in consequence of certain rumours which we must all have heard, that fresh arrangements are to be made on the question of the taxation of motor cars, and I think it might be convenient if His Majesty's Government could give us at any rate some information of the lines on which the proposed legislation will proceed. I am, of course, aware that this House cannot deal intimately with questions of taxation, but as the projects which seem to be foreshadowed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer include matters of rating which will affect a great many of your Lordships very considerably, I think it is within the competence of this House that we should have a short discussion on the question. First of all, I would ask the noble Lord who, I believe, is going to reply for the Local Government Board on this Question to refer to the matter from two points of view. I am not now going to press the motorists' point of view, because the time will arrive when that can be done both in the other House and in this. But from the local authorities point of view the question of taxation and legislation with regard to motor cars is very important. To begin with, if we are to believe what has been said in another place, and if we are to take the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to certain deputations which have waited upon him, he has no intention at the present moment of giving anything to local authorities either in regard to providing them with funds for the extension of road management and improvement by them or in regard to setting up some central Board for the working of our roads. The former, I confess, is the more important of the two. At present no less than three Royal Commissions and one Departmental Committee have reported that the present system of road construction, maintenance, and administration is very bad. The Royal Commission on Local Taxation, the Royal Commission on London Traffic, and the Royal Commission on Motor Cars, have all made certain recommendations which, I fear, are at any rate for the present moment to a certain extent rendered nugatory by the fatal want which impedes so many good resolutions, namely, the want of money. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to tax motor cars more highly (and I am not personally one of those who say that certain classes of motor cars ought not to pay more than they do), I think that at the same time local authorities and motorists have some right to ask that if money is to be raised from them, it should be raised on the lines of the recommendations of these Commissions and this

Departmental Committee, namely, on the lines of road improvement and of alleviating the great nuisance arising from dusty roads, which is the greatest nuisance motorists have to face in the country, and the removal of which nuisance would not only add to the comfort of motorists, but also alleviate the sufferings of those who live alongside the roads.

At the present the Treasury receives all the money which is derived from carriage taxes, establishment taxes, and all kinds of other small licences and taxations. The money so received is paid into the Local Taxation Account and returns to the counties in the form of a grant in aid of local taxation. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to take from them, besides a proportion of that, a certain amount of the licence fees for renewals of driving licences and for motor cars registrations—a sum amounting to something like £80,000 a year—as well, all I can say is that the county councils, which now have a very hard time of it, will have a still harder time in the future. It must not be forgotten that they have to put all that is necessary under the Local Government Act in the shape of triangles, signs for designating dangerous crossings, and so on, and they can only do that out of the sum they receive on licences and registration of motor cars. If the Lord Chancellor were here he would corroborate me, I think, when I say that last year they received over £2,500 in motor car licences and driving fees to assist them towards putting up these notices, and I trust that His Majesty's Government, if they consider any question of increased taxation, will see that this is not only a question of motor cars, but a question of carriages as well, and will give some contribution to enable the county councils to assist towards the improvement of the roads and the removal of their dusty condition. I do not intend at this late hour to trespass on your Lordships' time at any great length, but I should like to say that it seems to me that if motors are to be taxed from the point of view of luxury, there are other things which should be taxed equally, and perhaps to a larger extent. For instance, there are yachts, racehorses, jewels, pictures, and even such things as the possession of an orchid house or anything else of that kind. But if the motor-car is to be taxed on that basis, I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer is rather under a fallacy concerning it, because the number of motor cars owned by rich people as compared with those owned by men of moderate means is comparatively small, and everyone studying the statistics knows that at the present time the largest single owners of motor cars are professional men, such as doctors and so forth, who use them for the purposes of their business. I think that is a class which ought to be dealt with very lightly in regard to increased taxation. If, on the other hand, motor cars are to be taxed as destroyers of the roads—which is another argument that I can quite understand being put forward—there are other vehicles which destroy the roads far more than motor cars, and if taxation is to be put forward upon that basis, then I suggest that there is all the more justice in declaring that the money should be paid to the Local Taxation Account in order to assist the counties.

This is a serious question, my Lords, and it is becoming more serious every day. Thirteen million pounds a year is spent on the roads of this country, of which £11,000,000 is raised by rates. The administration of these roads is at present in a chaotic condition. Authorities mend the roads just as they choose; there is no unified system. To take an instance, between London and Carlisle there are over 170 authorities who manage that stretch of road. What we ought really to do in this country—and no doubt His Majesty's Government will follow up the Report of the Royal Commission on this subject—is to have a national road authority to administer the main roads of the country. Every body who has toured abroad knows the excellent condition of the roads in France, and this condition is solely due to the fact that they are managed by the Government as a national asset and as a national duty. I trust His Majesty's Government, if they have in view any further taxation of that sort, may come to the conclusion that a portion, if not the whole, of the money derived from the vehicles that use the roads, and especially motor cars, may be devoted to local purposes—to the purposes of the improvement and maintenance of the roads; and I trust that the noble Lord who is going to reply will be able to give us some assurance on that point.

*LORD ALLENDALE: The noble Lord has raised a very interesting and a very important question, and he has incidentally raised the whole question of motor car traffic and the upkeep of roads. This question is very much involved, and I can only regret that in the few words that I have to say in reply to the noble Lord's question, I am afraid I shall not be able to give him what he will think a very satisfactory answer, because this question is so much mixed up with financial considerations which, as nobody knows better than the noble Lord, hardly come within the province of this House. I am able to say, however, that the Government have no present contemplation of any general legislation on the subject of motor cars, although they quite recognise that an Amendment in the law relating to motor cars is desirable in some directions. The noble Lord has given us some very interesting facts and figures on the question of motor cars and the upkeep of roads, the cost of which has no doubt increased to a very considerable extent since the advent of motors. But the main part of his question is really one, as I have already said, for the Treasury to deal with, referring as it does to matters of finance.

Now, what the noble Lord asks is practically if, when fresh legislation or fresh taxation is being considered, the recommendations of the Royal Commissions on Motor Cars and on London Traffic may be borne in mind, and he also asks that steps may be taken for establishing a national road authority for the management of the main roads of the country. I notice that in his remarks just now he used the expression "national road authority," but the suggestion of the Royal Commission to which he has referred—the Royal Commission of 1906—was not quite that there should be what he has termed a national road authority. Their suggestion was that the money derived from the taxation of motor cars should be handed to some central department, and should be by them appropriated in part payment of the cost incurred by the local authorities in works having for their object the creation of more durable roads and the removal of dangers to traffic on the more important arteries of through communication. I think it will be seen, therefore, that it was not a national road authority such as the noble Lord has referred to, but a central department by whom the proceeds of licences should be distributed that was recommended. Such a department would, of course, come to exercise the same control over the maintenance of the roads as is now exercised by the various local authorities, while the actual management of the roads under the scheme proposed by the Royal Commission would remain with the existing authorities.

Then the noble Lord has also referred to other Royal Commissions and to a Departmental Committee which have already sat. The Royal Commission on London Traffic to which he referred, which sat in 1905, was by its terms of reference confined to the consideration of the traffic problems of London solely. It was, however, instructed to advise as to the desirability of establishing some tribunal to which schemes of railway and tramway construction should be referred, and it recommended the creation of a Traffic Board to deal with or advise upon all matters affecting traffic within the area of Greater London. The Report of that Commission does not, I think, bear very much upon the noble Lord's Question of to-day, but the Royal Commission on Local Taxation to which the noble Lord has also referred, did recommend, as the noble Lord has said, that a grant from the Exchequer should be made towards the maintenance of such roads as might be found on investigation by a "duly authorised tribunal" to be of national as well as of local importance. Then there was the Departmental Committee on Highway Authorities, 1903, which I think must be the one to which the noble Lord alluded, appointed by the Local Government Board. This Committee proposed a central Department to supervise the maintenance of these national highways. But I cannot find that any of these Commissions, or this Committee, to which the noble Lord has referred, recommended quite what he has suggested, viz., a national road authority to manage the main roads of the country, and the Government cannot give any promise for the establishment of any such authority. It would be, in effect, to create in this country roads maintained by the State similar to what are known as "*Routes Nationales*" in France; and this would tend to throw a very serious burden upon the Imperial funds, and would be, I venture to think, inconsistent with the policy of local government and decentralisation which has been adopted in this country, although of course, it must be admitted—and I frankly admit—that motor traffic is not merely local, but if I may use the expression, through traffic, and that considerable changes in locomotion throughout the country have taken place no doubt largely owing to the advent of motors. I may perhaps point out also—and this trenches on the question of finance—that the practice of earmarking specific heads of Imperial revenue for the purpose of grants in aid of local taxation, is opposed to the present policy of the Treasury. Chancellors of the Exchequer are all very grasping, I know, but in view of the increasing demands that are made upon the Exchequer, I do not know that Mr. Asquith is any more grasping than any of his predecessors, or than the noble Lord who generally sits on the front bench opposite (Viscount St. Aldwyn); but I strongly suspect, my Lords, that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer has any contemplation at all of getting increased revenue from the taxation of motor-cars—of which I have not the faintest notion—he will wish to have the disposal himself of any increased revenue which he may get, and not let it be intercepted for the purpose of grants-in-aid.

The noble Lord asks in his Question whether the Government will give any part of its increased taxation to local authorities for the upkeep of the roads. He must recognise, however—especially as he has sat in another place—that the whole question of subventions and of the taxation of motor cars are matters which do not directly affect your Lordships, although as taxpayers I know perfectly well that all your Lordships must be individually interested in knowing what extra taxation may be imposed upon you in another place, and those of you who own motor cars will, I am sure, be very anxious to know whether you will have to pay a higher tax in respect of them during the coming year. But, as I have said, I cannot pretend to any knowledge of what the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer are in this relation, and I am afraid we shall all have to wait patiently until he unfolds his Budget in a few weeks time.

Then, my Lords, there is the long-deferred and very urgent question of re-adjusting the burden of local taxation, which will have to be considered. The Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation has already been referred to by the noble Lord, and I suppose it may be taken for granted that when that very large question is dealt with, the suggestion of assisting from national sources the maintenance of arterial roads will be taken into very serious consideration, not only in connection with the motor-car traffic, but as part of a general and much wider scheme. The Royal Commission on Local Taxation did certainly make certain recommendations as regards giving assistance towards the maintenance of roads, but that was not particularly in respect to motor cars; in fact, I think it was—I will not say before the advent of motor cars, but before they had increased to the present enormous extent. But any recommendations made were made in respect of the relief of local rates.

My Lords, I am very sorry that I cannot make any more definite statement in reply to the noble Lord, because the whole question is so intimately bound up with the financial administration which, as I have already said, this House is not concerned with, and we also have the Budget still in front of us. I will, however, take care that the views which the noble Lord has expressed, and which I know are shared to a very large extent by noble Lords in this House and by others outside, shall be represented to the proper quarter.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, owing to an engagement in the country, I hardly expected that I should be able to be present on this occasion, and consequently I rise to address your Lordships in a somewhat unprepared state on this question. First of all, I would say that in the few remarks which I propose to make, I am speaking entirely for myself. On a previous occasion I criticised to a certain extent the action of His Majesty's Government, and I also criticised the remarks made by my noble friend Lord Montagu of Beaulieu with regard to this question of the maintenance of roads for motor car traffic. The views I expressed then I hold now. At the same time I sympathise entirely as to the importance of the question raised by my noble friend. He is of course an authority on all matters connected with motor cars and the motor-car traffic on our roads. I am not, but I sympathise with him, because I think that no one can deny that at present, and more and more as the years go by, we are seeing the motor-car traffic gradually, but surely increasing on the roads, and we are seeing steadily, gradually, and surely the increase of the employment given to a vast number of men, not only in the conduct of these motors, but also in the construction of all sorts and kinds of motor cars. Therefore it is a question which I think my noble friend is perfectly justified in bringing forward, and which I am glad to hear from the noble Lord opposite, that His Majesty's Government will carefully consider. But having said so much, I am bound to agree with what has fallen from the noble Lord opposite. I quite recognise that it is impossible for him to give any pledge as to what His Majesty's Government will do with regard to this, to my mind, very important question, because we must consider—and my noble friend opposite knows this full well, because he occupies a very prominent position in the County Council of Northumberland—that the whole question of road traffic is one of great importance to those living on the spot, and to the local authorities, and therefore they will look with a very considerable amount of anxiety at the course taken by His Majesty's Government when the whole question of local taxation, as my noble friend has told us it will be, is gone into, and at the extent to which the rates are to be relieved or assisted.

My Lords, I myself have no hesitation in saying now, as I have said before—although I fear I shall be censured for doing so by my noble friend Lord Montagu of Beaulieu—that I think motor cars do not pay half enough taxation for the amount of benefit they receive in being permitted to run along the roads. I consider that the amount which a motor car pays for the privilege of being able to run from John o' Groats to Land's End, and for having the roads kept in condition, is not adequate. I myself, as an owner of motor cars, would be only too glad to pay more, whether the tax is to be levied per horse-power or however the Government may decide, in order that I might feel that the roads were kept in order for me, and that I had a right to use those roads. I say again that at the present moment, to my mind, motor cars are certainly undertaxed; but as to how the question of taxation of motor cars is to be dealt with, I do not pretend to say. I remember that I said a year ago that I thought they ought to pay according to horse-power. I thought then that the very large fund which would result should be at the disposal of the Government. I still maintain that it should be at the disposal of the Government and not of the local authorities, for the purpose of maintaining the roads and of compensating those who are damaged by these motors rushing past them.

My noble friend Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, said that he did not see why motor cars, any more than *objets d'art* and other luxuries, should be taxed. I differ with him upon that, because motor cars are a cause of inconvenience to others, while *objets d'art* are not, and I consider that those who cause inconvenience to the public ought to pay for doing so. Therefore, I think that this is certainly a question which the Government ought to consider. In times past, when motor cars first originated, I think I may say that the drivers showed no consideration whatever for anyone. They rushed through the towns and villages regardless of any damage they did; they scared men, women, and children, as well as horses and cattle on the roads and in the fields, and I think the unpopularity of motor cars in the first instance was due entirely to that class of driver. But I am glad to think that the class of driver who is now employed is very different. He is forbidden by his employer to do anything, so far as he can avoid it, to cause inconvenience to the districts through which he passes, and I think that the British public consequently view the question of motor cars in quite a different spirit from what they did a few years ago.

I am bound to say I look with a certain amount of contempt upon police traps. I have always noticed that police traps are usually set in the safest part of the road, in those districts in which no harm could be done by going at a great speed—and yet it is at those very spots where no harm can be done, that there are policemen waiting to capture those drivers who are exceeding the legal speed. But where ought they to be? Not wasting their time in setting traps in those safe districts, but in the villages and towns where children are running about and risking their lives and limbs.

My Lords, I think this is a very big question to enter into, and I am very glad indeed that my noble friend has raised it. I certainly hope that when the time comes for raising this question of local taxation the views which I have put shortly and crudely before your Lordships may be taken into consideration, and that the whole system of motor car traffic along the roads, which is at the present time a very important question, and will become more and more important as the years go by, may be taken into consideration, and the matter fully discussed and considered before any definite conclusion is arrived at.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord FITZMAURICE): My Lords, the question which my noble friend has raised is one (and nobody, I think, appreciates that more than he does) of immense and almost endless ramifications. I was rather sorry that in the course of his observations he dwelt so entirely upon the damage done to the roads by motor cars, and that he did not say a word about—at least so far as I followed his argument, he did not refer specifically to—the much greater damage done to roads by road engines as distinct from motor cars. I suppose that nobody who lives in the neighbourhood of a town can possibly fail to be aware that one road engine, in the course of a few hours, will do a far greater amount of damage than a very great number of motor cars, and also that there is a tendency now, on the part of railway companies, to take such traffic as they have heretofore still continued to place upon our fast disappearing canals off those canals and to put it upon road engines and send it along the roads. For example, in the neighbourhood of Bath and Bristol, the Midland Railway Company has taken its traffic off the Kennet and Avon Canal, and has put it upon the main roads in the counties of Somerset and Wilts and in the City of Bath (which is an independent road authority) which runs parallel to that canal, and those roads, which used to be some of the finest roads in the country, and were very popular, especially with the bicycling community, have now been almost entirely destroyed, and the cost of these roads to the county authorities has been enormously increased. That, of course, raises a question which is very germane to what has fallen from my noble friend, and which will undoubtedly have to be considered whenever this very large and complicated question is dealt with—I mean the law relating to extraordinary traffic. My noble friend knows—for he has given an almost life-long study to this question—that the law relating to extraordinary traffic is in a state of most extraordinary confusion. At a very early period of the appearance of this greatly increased traffic upon our roads, decisions were given—and I have no doubt they were perfectly sound as having been given by eminent Judges—that "extraordinary traffic" only meant traffic which was not ordinary traffic—that it was not "extraordinary" in the sense of being unusually great in the point, let us say, of the weight, or quantity, or quality, of the traffic itself. They decided that you had simply to ascertain the question whether it was part of the ordinary traffic of the district or not. Then subsequently there were other decisions which rather qualified that doctrine, and quite recently, in regard to this very Midland Railway Company, in the neighbourhood of the city of Bath, there has been a decision given which no doubt is a very great encouragement to the road authorities. Now it stands to reason that if the road authorities are able to enforce claims for extraordinary traffic against companies which do this damage, and if they are able to recover a considerable amount of the increased cost—not, perhaps, that I am very hopeful about that—it would in some ways rather modify the present position, because it would remove a portion of the grievance which the local authorities have, as I think, far more against the owners of heavy traffic like the road engines than against the owners of motor cars, though no doubt the motor cars are far more numerous in themselves than the road engines.

Then, whenever this question comes up, I have no doubt the Government will also have to consider certain questions on which my noble friend touched, though not very fully. For example, my noble friend said, and said very truly, that one of the greatest evils of our present road system was the enormous number of authorities. I always regretted that the late Government, when they were passing that great measure, the Local Government Act of 1888, accepted an Amendment by which the county councils were able to divest themselves of a considerable portion of their authority and their duty, by contracting with minor authorities. Undoubtedly the enormous number of local road authorities is a very great evil. It will be great in any case, because you have all the county authorities—not only the geographical counties, but the administrative counties, which include all the great county boroughs—boroughs above 50,000 population. But if, in addition to that, a county council contracts with all the minor authorities in a county, or with some of them, you mmediately intensify that evil twenty or thirty-fold, according to the circumstances of your county.

LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU nodded assent.

*LORD FITZMAURICE: I am glad to see that my noble friend agrees with me. And the contracting clause to which I refer, is all the more dangerous because there is generally a certain amount of local popularity to be got by telling the minor authorities that you are going to contract with them. The unfortunate result has been that the less progressive counties in England have taken advantage of that clause, and have very largely divested themselves of the duty which Parliament placed upon them, and in that way have enormously increased the existing confusion and expense.

Although my noble friend spoke of two Commissions, I think as a matter of fact the second body was not a Commission but a Departmental Committee, and that Departmental Committee issued a very valuable Report. In that Report there were some specific recommendations upon this point — that the powers of the county councils to divest themselves of their duty in regard to road maintenance should be very seriously considered by the Government.

Then there is yet another matter, which I do not think my noble friend mentioned at all, which bears upon this question, namely, the extraordinarily weak position in which the county councils of England stand as compared with the county councils of Ireland, with regard to the expense of road improvements. I believe this is not very generally known: that the greatest local bodies that we have in England—the county councils—have no compulsory power for taking land for the improvement of roads. When the late Government were passing the Local Government (Ireland) Act through Parliament, they accepted a very useful Amendment. I am glad to say that, because just now I was criticising them in reference to an unfortunate Amendment which they accepted in the English Act, but by general consent in the House of Commons (and English Members took some part in the discussion—I myself ventured to do that somewhat dangerous thing, and it is a thing which I have very seldom ventured upon doing, to discuss an Irish Bill in the House of Commons) a clause was accepted under which the Irish county councils were given that which the English county councils have not got, namely, a cheap and easy method of taking land by compulsion, when they cannot get it by agreement, for purposes of road improvement. Of course that is a right which has to be very carefully guarded, in order to prevent landowners being subject to any injustice. The machinery provided was partly administrative, partly judicial, but as I say this clause was accepted quite unanimously by the House of Commons and by your Lordships' House. If a similar provision were made with regard to England, I believe the county councils would be enabled, in regard to this matter of road maintenance and road improvement, to move with greater freedom, especially in the case of land near large towns, where in many cases roads seem to end in the neck of a bottle, and where there is a great tendency to ask the very highest price which can be got for the land. An alteration of the law in this respect would, I know from experience, be a very great advantage to the county councils.

I have ventured to mention all these subjects in order that I might fully justify the position which the Government take—that as these points all exist, and as there are those larger questions of local convenience on which my noble friend dwelt so very clearly in his speech, I do not think anybody can complain, if, bearing in mind the rather lengthy programme which the Government have before them, they do not, in this session at least, attempt to deal with this very difficult question.

LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU: The noble Lord who answered me on this question hardly, I think, grasped that what I asked him for was not so much information as to whether a higher tax on motor cars was to be put on in the ensuing Budget; what I rather invited the Government's attention to was the fact that whatever process they adopt for taxation the money should be handed over, as the noble Lord (Lord Fitzmaurice) has made out so good a case for, to the local authorities for the purposes of the roads. The Departmental Committee to which I referred particularly advocated that there should be a central authority, which might be the Local Government Board or some other Department, to take over the work of the maintenance of the main roads. I did not go fully into the Royal Commission Report, because it would have taken too long. After what has fallen from noble Lords opposite, I am afraid that the subject will not receive the attention of the Government this session, but I hope that His Majesty's Government will bear it in mind should an opportunity arise at any time of doing anything to help forward this matter.

LORD ALLENDALE: I apologise to the noble Lord if I omitted to refer to the particular point to which he has just called attention, but I was rather regarding the whole question as one which is very much mixed up with these three Royal Commissions and the Departmental Committee. I am quite sure that all the recommendations of these various bodies will receive the careful consideration of whatever Government is in power at the time when this question comes to be dealt with.

INDIAN GOVERNORS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

*__LORD LAMINGTON__, in asking whether His Majesty's Government would consider the advisability of amending the statute by which the Viceroy, the Governors of Madras and Bombay, and the Commander-in-Chief in India are unable to obtain leave to return home without resignation of their appointments, said: My Lords, the prohibition that forms the subject of my Question dates from an Act of 33 George III. I have read somewhere, but cannot now trace the reference, the origin of this prohibition. If I remember rightly, it was owing to the absence from India of some highly placed official for a period of two or more years without leave. However, the prohibition was finally embodied in an Act of 3 & 4 William IV., and it now reads as follows—

"That the return to Europe or the departure from India with intent to return to Europe of any governor-general of India, governor, member of council, or commander-in-chief, shall be deemed in law a resignation and voidance of his office or employment."

That prohibition has been so far amended and qualified by an Act of 1861 as to allow members of the Council to obtain leave on medical certificate.

My Lords, I need hardly point out the great difference between the circumstances which obtain now and those which obtained in the year 1793, when a voyage to India occupied anything from a year to eighteen months, and even in the time of William IV., it might often have a duration of from six to nine months. In addition, there is now a weekly mail, and there is the telegraph incessantly going between the Government of India and the authorities at home. Therefore, there is really no comparison between the methods of communication which now exist and those which existed at the time these Acts were framed; and if this is such a very wise and important provision, it may well be asked why it is not found in any other Department or in any other service. It certainly does not exist in the case of any other offices held under the Crown, and it may safely be assumed that in no other country in the world does this disability extend to any official, and I do not imagine for a moment that anybody would say that if you were in these days framing a system of administration for the Indian Empire you would insert such a provision as this. I am myself far too profound a believer in the value of the opinion, the judgment, and the knowledge of the man on the spot to propose anything that would encourage him to take leave for his own recreation or amusement, and thereby possibly injure his authority and prestige. Nor, indeed, can I imagine that any occupant of these offices that are subject to this prohibition would be willing idly to absent himself from his post. The work is so interesting, the problems to be solved are so varied, so complex and so absorbing, and the distribution of officers and general system of patronage demands such constant and urgent attention, that I cannot conceive of any of these officials being anything but loth to sever himself, even temporarily, from the affairs of his office. But, my Lords, there are inseparable accidents of our existence. Death and illness are always possibilities, and these upset your best-framed regulations; and in my opinion the failure to recognise them may only accentuate their possibilities for evil, and by not making allowance for these contingencies the continuity which it was the obvious intention of these Acts to preserve may be only the more impaired.

If I may do so, I would show this by my own experience, but I do so with extreme reluctance, and I would ask your Lordships to acquit me of any desire or intention of bringing forward my own misfortune as the basis of my argument. I only use it by way of illustration, and nothing more. Still less am I seeking to ventilate a grievance, because for the sympathy and goodwill that I received from the Secretary of State I can entertain nothing but the most profound gratitude—a gratitude equalled only by my admiration for the manner in which he discharged the affairs of his office. Therefore there is nothing personal about what I am going to say; it is merely used by me in illustration of my argument. Last year I was holding the post of Governor of Bombay, and owing to certain untoward circumstances in connection with ill-health, my return home was necessitated. Before returning, I asked the Secretary of State if it was not possible to allow of my resignation with a view to subsequent reappointment. I only asked for a short leave of absence—say eight or ten weeks, but the Secretary of State, after giving full consideration to my application, said he could not grant it, as he considered it would be contrary to the spirit of the Act. Well, my Lords, what happened? I left towards the end of July, and my successor did not arrive in India until nearly the middle of November; so that the interruption—the interval between the holding of the Governorship by myself and my successor—was an interval of fourteen or fifteen weeks, as compared with the eight or ten weeks for which I had asked. Furthermore, the occupant of the post was fresh to his duties as compared with myself. I do not think it can be gainsaid, therefore, that continuity of administration was not secured in that instance, and that the spirit of the law would have been honoured rather in its breach than in its observance. I should not care how stringent were the conditions imposed upon any official who had to take leave—I should say that he must sacrifice his pay, that he should receive no allowance of passage money, and that there should be the strictest possible limitations of time imposed; but what I do contend is that the Government, or the Secretary of State, should not be debarred absolutely, helplessly, and hopelessly, from doing what might be considered advisable under such circumstances—that some discretion should be allowed in the matter of giving leave. Remember, this disability may operate very injuriously in preventing the Government obtaining the services of the men who may be best fitted to fill these posts. The point was mentioned by the late Lord Salisbury on an occasion which I will allude to later on. He said that "owing to the inability to obtain temporary leave or medical leave it was difficult to fill some of the offices specified in the schedule of a Bill which was then being brought forward;" and he added that "nobody who had had anything to do with the filling of those offices would doubt the accuracy of what he said." And I have had it on very good authority that one of the most distinguished Members of your Lordships' House has said that nothing would induce him to accept an office during the tenure of which he would be debarred from any possibility of returning home.

My Lords, that is one aspect of the case. Then there is another. The one I have mentioned deals rather with the removal of what to my mind constitutes a defect of the law, but there are those who hold strongly that it would be a decided gain were any one of these officials able to be summoned home for purposes of consultation and discussion by the Home Government. I need not dwell upon the advantages of personal discussion as compared with any amount of despatch or letter writing, but I may briefly state what has taken place in this connection. In 1887 it was thought desirable that His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught should leave his post of Commander-in-Chief in Bombay—a post which has been since abolished—so as to be enabled to attend the Jubilee of her late Majesty Queen Victoria; and Sir John Gorst, who was then Under-Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons, in moving the Second Reading of a Bill to enable His Royal Highness to come home, stated that it had been then contemplated by the Government that it might have been possible to have allowed His Royal Highness to resign with the intention of his being subsequently reappointed, but that it had been felt by the Government, then as now, that some would consider that such a course would constitute an evasion of the Act. Mr. Childers, in the course of the debate, said that he would be willing to support the Bill on the understanding that the Government as soon as possible introduced a Bill repealing this particular provision. Mr. W. H. Smith, the then Leader of the House of Commons, at once assented, and during his speech adverted strongly upon the advantages that would be obtained by the possibility of giving permission to any one of these officials to return home from time to time; and in 1891–1892 the noble Lord, Viscount Cross, introduced a Bill into your Lordships' House with these objects in view. That Bill both gave permission for any one of these officials to obtain leave on medical certificate, and also provided that on public grounds he might be summoned home at the discretion of the Secretary of State. Speaking for myself, I think that the conditions surrounding this concession were really almost too liberal, but that is a point into which I need not enter now. During the course of the debate, the late Lord Salisbury mentioned that he considered the present system was anomalous and unwise. That Bill passed through your Lordships' House. It then went to the House of Commons, where it was taken charge of by my noble friend Lord Curzon, but it never arrived at any further stage, owing to the general election supervening.

Now I come to another stage of this question. In 1902 I understand that during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon a despatch was sent by the Government of India dealing with this question, and

I would ask the noble Lord who is going to reply to this question whether he would not allow that despatch to be laid upon the Table of this House, and also the reply made to it by the then Secretary of State. In speaking of the Bill of 1892 I ought to have mentioned that the Viceroy was not included amongst the officers that were put into the schedule.

My Lords, I think I have said enough to show that I am not myself recklessly proposing an innovation. It is a subject that has been approved of by most eminent statesmen, and it is also a subject that has met with the full approval of your Lordships' House. What I, however, most strenuously contend for is that this regulation, as it at present stands, is inadequate, and that it operates injuriously to the public interest, and therefore I press for some modification of it which will unfetter, in some degree, the Secretary of State so as to allow him to use his discretion. If it is thought that the discretion, if granted, might lead to laxity, then by all means hedge it round with every conceivable limitation, so as to safeguard it against abuse; but I do think, my Lords, that this is a subject which merits attention, and that the modification which I propose would certainly tend to the improvement of the public administration of the affairs of India.

VISCOUNT CROSS: My Lords, the noble Lord has referred to my action when I was Secretary of State for India. It is quite true that my attention was first called to this subject at the time of the Jubilee, and what the noble Lord has said is equally true, that it was desired, on public grounds, that the Duke of Connaught, who was then Commander-in-Chief of Bombay, should come home to attend the Jubilee. It was suggested to me at that time that I should allow him to resign his office, come home, and then be re-appointed. That I entirely declined to have anything at all to do with. I thought it would be a gross breach of the Act of Parliament and that it would be making a use of it which was never intended, and ought never to be allowed for a moment. So there was an end of that. Then there was no means of bringing him home except by a special Act of Parliament, and what my noble friend has said on this point is equally true; a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, it passed and became law, and the Duke of Connaught came home. But during the course of the discussion in the House of Commons, Mr. Childers, who at that time appeared on behalf of the Opposition, so to speak, made almost a stipulation that if that Bill was allowed to pass it ought to be as a general Act—not for this particular Commander-in-Chief, but that it ought to be a general Act, and so discussed. That pledge was given, and the result was that in 1891 we brought forward a Bill in your Lordships' House to allow the Viceroy and the other Government officers in India—the Commander-in-Chief and the Governors of Bombay and Madras—to come home on public grounds. But great care was taken that that should not be abused, because in the Bill which I brought forward no action was to be taken except with the consent of the Secretary of State for India in Council; and there was the further safeguard that it had also to pass through the Viceroy and his Council in India before it could be acted upon. So that probably every safeguard that could be adopted was introduced into that Bill.

I agree with my noble friend that when the Act to which he has referred was passed, communication between India and England was a totally different thing from what it is now. At that time you had to go round by the Cape, and months and months would elapse. Now all that is changed. That Bill of 1891 did not go through, because it was crowded out. That is a thing which very often happens in sessions of Parliament in regard to Bills, some of which are good and some bad, and I daresay it is possible that in the present session a certain number of Bills may be crowded out. In 1892 it was brought in again. Lord Northbrook, who had a great experience, of course, in Indian affairs, objected to the Viceroy being included, and he gave very substantial reasons why he should not be included. He said that the Viceroy himself stood quite apart from anybody else—he was on a pinnacle—he was the great man—and the result was that I consented to strike the

Viceroy out of the schedule, and the Bill passed your Lordships' House with that omission. I am not quite certain whether anybody could imagine India without the presence of a Viceroy, and I think Lord Northbrook was right. The effect of bringing a Viceroy home for consultation, even on matters of great importance, would very likely have had a bad effect in India itself, and would to a certain extent have pulled down the Viceroy from the pinnacle upon which he stood, because the Viceroy is the Viceroy, and known as such all over the Indian continent. Well, that second Bill passed your Lordships' House with the exclusion of the Viceroy. If I remember rightly, Lord Northbrook also wanted to strike out the Commander-in-Chief, but your Lordships declined to do that, and the Bill retained the provision with regard to the Commander-in-Chief. My noble friend said perfectly truly that the Bill passed your Lordships' House, and was brought into the other House of Parliament, and it would no doubt have become law if it had not been for the dissolution of Parliament itself, and the consequent dissolution of the Government which brought it in.

There my connection with this subject stops. I quite agree that these great officers should not be called home except for very important reasons, and I think that the safeguards which were put into that Bill, requiring the sanction—in fact the initiation—of the Secretary of State in Council, and also the assent of the Viceroy and his Council in India, were safeguards which everybody must admit were very great, and such as to render any abuse impossible. There is no doubt that Lord Salisbury, who had been Secretary of State for India himself, and who was at that time Prime Minister, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, most warmly backed up the Bill which I had the honour of introducing to your Lordships' House. He, at all events, knew as much about India as most people. I am still of the same opinion as I was then, and I think with what my noble friend brought forward as Lord Salisbury's view, and also his statement that the absolute inability, as the Act stood, of the holder of one of these great offices to come home, however important the subject might be for which he was to be brought home, did at all events make an extra difficulty in finding men ready to take up these posts.

I have said now all that I mean to say. I leave the matter in your Lordships' hands. Whether my noble friend will be content with what he may hear from His Majesty's Government I do not know, nor do I know whether His Majesty's Government have any intention of bringing in any such Bill or not; but at all events I think we ought to be grateful to the noble Lord for bringing this matter before your Lordships' House. As I say, I am still of the same opinion as I was as that time—that it would be wise with sufficient safeguards, for public purposes alone, and leaving out the Viceroy, to allow the other Indian officers to come home on leave.

*LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, perhaps as my name has been mentioned, and as I have necessarily had some experience of this subject, I may be allowed to say a word or two before the representative of the Government replies. The noble Lord who has just spoken has given us a sufficient history of what has passed in respect of the Bill of 1892, but the noble Lord, Lord Lamington, who made such a clear and, as it seemed to me, convincing statement of the case, alluded to events that passed while I was Viceroy. It is true, as the noble Lord said, that we did consider this question, and that a communication was addressed to the Secretary of State for India by my Council on the subject, by which I mean that the Government of India was unanimously in favour of the alteration of the law, and of the concession for which the noble Lord is now asking being made in respect of the offices to which he has alluded. For my own part, I have not the slightest objection, if the noble Lord who represents the Government thinks fit to lay that despatch on the table of the House. The subject is of such importance that I think the matter ought to be placed fully before your Lordships. May I say that with the main proposition—in fact the entire proposition—of the noble Lord, Lord

Lamington, I am in complete agreement. I have never been able to discover any valid reason why, alone in the official hierarchy of the Empire, these officers to whom he refers—the Viceroy of India, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Governors of Madras and Bombay—should be debarred, under any circumstances whatever, from going home on leave, however short. Let us remember that they are serving their country in a climate that is extremely trying, that their work is exceedingly laborious, and that the strain upon them might almost be described as overwhelming. And yet under no conditions whatever, either of public interest, or of ill-health, or of personal convenience, are they ever permitted to return even for a day to this country.

The noble Lord, Lord Lamington, has clearly pointed out to your Lordships that this practice is really a survival of an obsolete era—that it provided for a state of things which no longer exists, and that the extreme and increasing rapidity of steam communication, which renders it possible for an officer to leave India, return to England, and get back to India in the space of three months, really cuts away the ground from the Act in the form in which it was originally passed. The noble Lord alluded, if I may say so, with great good taste and reserve to his own position, and being very familiar with the circumstances of his case, I must say that it seemed to me exceedingly hard that because of the conditions to which he referred his tenure of office at Bombay, fraught as it was with great advantages to the people of that Presidency, should have been cut short. But I am familiar with other cases, and I may, perhaps, mention to your Lordships the case of a very high official of the Government of India in my day. I allude to the late Sir William Lockhart, with whom I had the honour of serving when he was Commander-in-Chief. Sir William Lockhart died at his post in India, and yet I have no doubt that his life might have been lengthened—it might conceivably even have been spared—had he been permitted to return to this country and to take medical advice here. The matter was one which he more than once discussed with me, but he could not afford, in the position in which he was placed, to throw away the great office which he held. He was obliged, therefore, to remain in India, and he died, in the circumstances I have described, at his post.

My Lords, there is one other point to which I would ask leave to draw your attention, and that is the essential absurdity of the position in which we are placed by the terms of this obsolete Act. The noble Lord read out the conditions of the Act, which are that the occupants of the high offices in question must not leave India in order to return to Europe. That is the operative condition. Now your Lordships will see that there is nothing in this Act to prevent the Commander-in-Chief, for instance, in India from taking command in a campaign in South Africa. He might have headed the expedition which we sent for the relief of the Legations in Pekin. Similarly as regards the Viceroy: there is nothing in the Act to prevent the Viceroy from going, for purposes of health or otherwise, to Ceylon, Mauritius, or even Cairo. I was myself permitted, while in India, to pay an official visit to the Persian Gulf, which, as your Lordships know, lies a good way outside the borders of India. But the moment any one of these high officers leaves with the view of returning to England, the one place where it is conceivable that he may be wanted either in the public interest or in his own—then this disability falls upon him like an axe.

Both the noble Lords who have spoken, have alluded to the case of the Duke of Connaught in the year 1887, when, in order to escape the rigidity of the statute, a special Bill had to be passed through both Houses of Parliament to enable His Royal Highness to come home to attend the Jubilee of the Queen. But there is another case which has not been mentioned, which happened at an early stage in history and is perhaps forgotten, and that is the case of Lord Napier of Magdala. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, which at that time had a separate military existence. While holding that post he was appointed to the command of the Abyssinian Expedition. He went to Abyssinia; he conducted the campaign, as we know, with success, and His Majesty's Government at that time desiring to consult him, he was actually brought to England on the absurd plea that he would be conducting his duties as Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army here. That, of course, was a ludicrous evasion of the statute. Then I am not certain, in view of what has fallen from Lord Cross, that the statute was not evaded in my own case too, because when I came home in 1904, I could only obtain leave by resigning my office and being re-appointed when I went back—a very clumsy method, as it seems to me, of continuing a man in office for a longer period of years and giving him leave which he may not only desire, but require.

My Lords, the noble Lord has, I think, made clear to us the advantages of the change which he proposes. There is first the interest of the man himself—his health, which is liable to suffer—his private affairs, which may call for a brief visit to England. But I would prefer to rest it on the ground of the public interest. I remember the late Lord Salisbury speaking about the matter, and he laid the greatest stress upon the advantage which might accrue, in cases which are no doubt rare, but which still are likely to happen from time to time, in which the Government at home may require to consult here in England the Commander-in-Chief about some great military expedition, or to consult the Governor of Madras or the Governor of Bombay, or even the Viceroy himself. And if I may quote my own experience, I think that at a certain stage it would have been exceedingly advantageous to me if, for the space of a few weeks, I could have had the advantage of a private conversation with His Majesty's advisers at home.

As regards the drawbacks to the proposal, I must ask leave to differ from my noble friend Lord Cross, whom I served as Under-Secretary The noble Lord cut out the Viceroy from the Bill of 1892, accepting, as he told us just now, the reasoning of Lord Northbrook—the argument of Lord Northbrook being that the Viceroy was placed on such a pinnacle that it would be almost impossible to contemplate his being taken away, and that some nameless, but serious, results would accrue to India if he were not there. But, my Lords, if the pinnacle has ceased to be occupied by the Viceroy, somebody else climbs up and stands there in his place. During my absence for six months, in 1904, the pinnacle was occupied, and, if I may be allowed to say so, occupied with great advantage and distinction, by Lord Ampthill, and whatever the circumstances under which the Viceroy might be called home the Viceroyalty would not be vacant through his absence. The most senior member of his Council, for instance, might for a few weeks or for a month or two, take his place. I venture to say from my own experience that the argument we have heard before, that the prestige of the Viceroy would be impaired, or that the efficiency or continuity of the Government would in any degree be affected, is quite illusory. I agree with my noble friend Lord Cross that if the privilege be conceded it ought to be fenced round with every manner of restriction. I would myself surround it with restrictions greater than those he proposed in the Bill of 1892. At that time he proposed leave of absence being granted for as long a period as six months. I think that in the despatch written by the Government of India in my day we proposed a maximum of only three months. We proposed that that leave should only be given once at the most in any term of office, that it should only be given upon the advice and with the consent both of the Governor-General in Council in India and of the Secretary of State in Council in England, and that it should only be given for one of three objects—public interest, ill-health, or important private concerns. So restricted, my Lords, I believe that the concession, if made, would be decidedly advantageous both to the individual and to the public in occasional cases, and that it would do no harm whatever either in India or in England; and if my noble friend, or any other noble Lord in this House, at any time puts the proposal forward in the shape of a Bill, I, for my part, will do my best to advocate it.

Lord Curzon of Kedleston.

Earl BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, I am sure your Lordships will especially regret to-night the absence of the noble

Member the Leader of the House, who would have brought the weight of his authority to deal with this question. I can only say, on behalf of the Government and the India Office, that they are quite unable to agree to the suggestion of the noble Lord, and that they would not consent to introduce, or even to approve of, any legislation in this direction.

With regard to the Paper which the noble Lord mentioned, I will certainly mention the matter to the Secretary of State. The noble Lord will of course quite understand that I am unable to promise anything concerning it myself, but I will consult Mr. Morley on the subject. With regard to the Bill of the noble Viscount (Viscount Cross), I think it has not been sufficiently pointed out that he also put restrictions in another direction upon the home-coming of these various officers, because he made it quite plain that they could only come home for matters of public convenience, and that matters connected with their private affairs should not be considered a sufficient reason for their coming home.

The noble Lord who asked the Question laid stress, quite rightly, upon the increased advantages in the way of public travelling since the days when this prohibition was made law. He forgot also to remind your Lordships how much easier it is to consult officials in India by means of the telegraph in these days, and I think if he refers to the one, it is only fair that your Lordships should be reminded of the other. The fact of the matter is, my Lords, that in the opinion of the India Office, the Government of India is a system which is very nicely balanced and adjusted, and there will be considerable danger of those delicate arrangements being interfered with if it is altered in the direction which the noble Lord suggests. May I make a practical suggestion to the noble Lord (Lord Curzon of Kedleston), who represents India as well as Ireland in this House. Imagine that there was controversy on a matter of importance between the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy. Let us imagine that the Commander-in-Chief was sent over to consult the Council of India at home. Would the noble Lord wish to see the Viceroy hurrying after the Commander-in-Chief by the next mail boat? Does he think it would be very dignified if these officials, either singly or together, were to come back to England and were to consult the Secretary of State upon a matter upon which they might possibly be divided in opinion?

*LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON: That case, although an ingenious one, and not without a personal application, is a case which could not possibly arise under the proposal which I suggested. One of the conditions which we laid down in India was that either the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief should only come home, not merely with the consent of the Secretary of State in Council in London, but with the consent of the Governor-General in Council in India, and in the circumstances to which the noble Lord alludes, I can hardly imagine that that consent would be given.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: That is of course a matter of difference of opinion. At any rate, it would not be impossible, and I think the theory I have put forward is not entirely an impracticable one, although I am rather willing to agree with the noble Lord that it is quite likely that permission under those circumstances might have been refused to one of the parties to the case. But I think it is only right to point out to your Lordships that after all no very serious inconvenience has been felt in the past. Five years is not a very long period, and a continuous service for that time is not altogether unreasonable. It is scarcely fair to speak of India as if it could be compared with other posts or with other countries within the British Empire. India is an exceptional case. It is liable to sudden emergencies which are specially dangerous in a country without representative Government. The work there is specially responsible, and the offices to which reference has been made have really, I think, no parallel anywhere in any other part of the Empire. The responsibility is much more concentrated in the individual in those offices than in any others, and I am not sure, my Lords, that it would not be unfair to the Government of India to consult either the Governor-General or the Commander-in-Chief alone. There might be a tendency, if such a practice became common, to transfer the government of India in times of crisis from the Governor-General in Council to the Government and the Cabinet at home. The cases of emergency to which a reference has been made by the noble Lord are surely just those very cases when it is important that these officers should themselves be present in India. Then, my Lords, I think if leave is to be recognised on public grounds there would be considerable difficulty in drawing a line, because it would be possible that undesirable discussion might arise in connection with them, in the same way that if leave was asked for on medical grounds the Medical Board could scarcely refuse a certificate. And, my Lords, if the cause of the desire to return home were ill-health, resignation would probably be desirable. Extreme cases have been met, as was happily done in the case of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Curzon) by reappointments, and there are, I think, perhaps special objections in the case of the Viceroy, though a great deal of what I have said applies, in my opinion, with equal force to the other positions which have been mentioned. The position of the Acting Governor-General, with his hands tied, might be somewhat difficult, and even dangerous, especially in view of his special concern with the foreign relations of India. The opinion of the India Office is that the Governor-General, or the Viceroy, should have no temptation to separate his life interest from India during his tenure of the office, and that his authority should not be impaired by the sense that he might be able to come home at any time and to share, perhaps, part of his authority with the Secretary of State in England. Under those circumstances, my Lord, I can only repeat what I began by saying—namely, that the Secretary of State cannot under any circumstances give his approval to legislation on these lines.

*THE EARL OF CROMER: My Lords, I did not come to the House with any intention of speaking on this subject, but I would like to state very briefly that I entirely agree with the proposal made by my noble friend Lord Lamington. I confess I heard with considerable disappointment the statement of the noble Lord opposite, that the Government were not prepared to consider this proposal. I do not base my support of the noble Lord's suggestion in any way upon the private interests of the individual; I base it entirely and wholly on public grounds and I think the public grounds for making a change in the Statute are extremely strong. The difficulties of governing India are notoriously increasing year by year, and it is therefore becoming more and more important to render these high appointments attractive, and to attract the best brains to fill them. Successive Governments have certainly been extremely fortunate in their nominations for the offices of Viceroy and Governors, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the stipulation that when a man is once appointed, he cannot return until the end of five years, does somewhat narrow the field of selection, and might quite conceivably act as a deterrent to those who might otherwise make most desirable occupants of these positions. It must be borne in mind that those who are competent to fill the positions in question are, if not in middle life, at all events not in their first youth, and there are generally private or family affairs which render it very difficult for such men to absent themselves for five years from this country. Moreover, although these appointments are highly honourable, they are very far from being lucrative. On the contrary, they involve heavy expenditure on the part of those who fill them, and therefore I say that anything that can be done to make these appointments attractive is very much to be desired.

Another point to which I should like to draw attention is that so far from there being any objection to these high officials leaving India, it appears to me that if they occasionally left India for a short visit to England it would be of the greatest possible advantage to the public service, because they would thus be enabled to consult with the Secretary of State and others here, and to keep in touch with English public life, which is liable to great change in the course of the five years of their absence. This is all the more important if the practice of peripatetic politicians going out to India to air their own views is to become general. I can only say that during the many years that I was in Egypt I found that it was of great advantage to myself—and I hope it was of some advantage to the country—to be able to come home for two or three months every year, and not only to see the officials, but also to get out of the local groove, and to be able to understand thoroughly the views held in this country about the affairs in which I was specially interested. May I add also, with all due deference to the noble Lord (Lord Cross) and my late distinguished relative, Lord Northbrook, that I do not accept the statement that the Viceroy ought to be excluded from the proposed amendment of the law any more than any of the other officials who have been mentioned. A third point is that I think if this suggestion were carried out it would tend towards continuity of policy in India. I should be very glad to see the Viceroys and Governors encouraged to stay more than five years. Remember what happens now. I am sure noble Lords who have themselves occupied these high positions in India will agree with me that it takes six months or more for them to get into their saddle, so to speak, and that during the last six months that they hold office they cannot do much. Therefore they have practically only four years in which to work, and four years is a very short time in which to carry out an important measure in India, because such measures have to be carried out steadily and without hurry. Therefore, for my own part, I should very much like to see the Viceroy and the Governors of Madras and Bombay encouraged to accept a second term of office, because I feel sure that this would prove to be a very great advantage to the public service; but I am quite sure that they will never do so unless they are permitted to come home at times. For these reasons, my Lords, I regret that His Majesty's Government are not prepared to accept the proposal of the noble Lord.

*LORD AMPTHILL: My Lords, I am extremely reluctant to express any disagreement with my two noble friends with whom I served contemporaneously in India, for we worked together on all matters in India with very pleasant harmony. But since I hold, and have always held, that the views expressed by those noble Lords upon the matter now under discussion are wrong, I should not think it fair to the solitary spokesman of the Government, who is at present facing odds of four to one, if I failed to state my opinion.

The grounds upon which this suggested change is urged are two-fold—firstly, the public interest, and secondly, the private interests of the individuals concerned. I do not think any case at all has been made out for the relaxation of the Statute on public grounds, and it will not have been unnoticed, I think, by your Lordships that the noble Viscount (Viscount Cross), who spoke with such a weight of experience and authority on this matter, expressly said that he would only give the leave on public grounds. If any case has been made at all, in my humble opinion it has been made on the grounds of the personal interests of the individuals concerned. But with regard to the remarks which were made by the noble Earl (The Earl of Cromer), I would ask your Lordships whether the mere off-chance of coming home on some possible or potential matter of public importance in the course of five years could possibly affect the decision of a man who was asked to accept the position of Viceroy, and who was deterred from doing so by the thought of the long exile. There would only be the off-chance of coming home, even according to the stipulations of my noble friend, Lord Lamington, if some urgent public affairs, or some great domestic calamity, called for his presence. Personally—speaking with some experience of the offices both of Viceroy and of Governor—I cannot conceive any ordinary circumstances in which personal consultation, at the cost of the large delay of the journey home, would have any advantage over the present rapid and complete means of communication by post and telegraph; and again, if the Viceroy or the Governor did come home, he could, as has been already pointed out, only give his personal opinion, and in any protracted negotiations with His Majesty's Ministers at home, he would be divorced from the opinion of his Council, and that, in my view, would be a dangerous constitutional innovation. Still more dangerous, I venture to think, would it be for the Commander-in-Chief to come home and give his opinions on those immensely important military questions which cannot possibly be separated from political questions, independently of those of the Viceroy, and of the Governor-General, in Council. It would be, in effect, an abrogation of those large constitutional principles which underlie the phrases so familiar to everyone who has had to do with India, "Governor-General in Council" and "Governor in Council." I can imagine circumstances in which it might be advisable, expedient, and useful if members or representatives of His Majesty's Government at home were to go out to India for the purposes of such consultation, and to see things with their own eyes on the spot, but I cannot conceive any circumstances in which it would really be useful for Viceroys or Governors to come home. If such circumstances were to arise, they could, as has been pointed out, and as has been done on previous occasions, be met by special legislation.

As regards the personal grounds for the suggested alteration, I hold that if circumstances of domestic calamity, or business necessity, should arise such as to prevent a Viceroy or a Governor from giving the whole of his time, thought, and attention to his arduous and responsible charge, it is clearly right and desirable that he should resign his appointment. Viceroys in India, and Governors in a lesser degree, are in a position which seems to me analogous to that of commanders of armies in the field, and their position is at any rate analogous to that of a Minister of the Crown in this country. They are, so to speak, on active service; they are on duty, and on a duty which demands incessant attention from day to day and from hour to hour. It is no more possible for them, in my opinion, to leave their posts, and to lose touch with the affairs which they are directing, than it is possible for a general to leave his Army in the face of the enemy, or for the Prime Minister of the country (and this is really the closest analogy) to go 7,000 miles away, out of the reach of King's Messengers and rapid communications. Your Lordships will agree with me that the latter is a contingency which would not be tolerated for one moment in this country. Comparisons with the Governments of the Colonies are, for obvious reasons with which I need not delay your Lordships, beside the point, but a specious comparison has been suggested by two noble Lords between the positions of the Viceroy, Governors, and Commander-in-Chief, and those of other members of the public service in India. But I venture to think, with all deference, that that comparison must break down on the slightest examination. It is obvious, in the first instance, that men who are appointed on political grounds, and for a certain definite term of five years, are in a different position from those whose services are non-political and are their life-long profession. It is precisely the same distinction which holds good in this country. Any member of the Civil Service, as all your Lordships know, can take his two months leave at any time, and completely sever himself from the cares and duties of the office to which he belongs, provided there is no unusual official inconvenience. But this is not the case with the Minister in charge of the Department. Even if the Minister goes away on a holiday, though it be abroad, he has to remain in constant touch with his office, and he cannot throw aside all care and responsibility. This state of things would not be possible in regard to Viceroys and Governors if 7,000 miles of sea were to separate them from their subordinate officials and from their duties. It is true that Secretaries of State have on occasion made long tours, and thus absented themselves from their offices, but those were cases in which the inconvenience was justified by the exigencies of Imperial affairs. But in that connection it must be remembered that under the theory of the Constitution there is only one Secretary of State, although the duties of that office are divided among several Ministers of the Crown. If, therefore, a Secretary of State is absent from the country, there are always several of his colleagues in a similar position and vested with precisely similar and equal authority, to discharge his functions, and that without any rearrangement of offices or any extra cost to the State. But the thing which influences me most, in spite of the views of my noble friend (Lord Curzon), which on all subjects I regard with the greatest deference, is the bad effect that the temporary absence of the Viceroy or the Governor would undoubtedly have on public opinion in India. The difference between the position of the Viceroy and the Governors, and that of the officials of the Indian bureaucracy is one which is very keenly and very fully appreciated by the people of India, and to place those high dignitaries under similar regulations with regard to leave as the officials of the bureaucracy would tend to reduce them to the level of the permanent official, with a consequent loss, *pro tanto*, of their peculiar prestige and influence. As regards the feeling of the European officials themselves, there would be a similar and a no less marked effect. The Viceroy, and the Governors of the Presidencies, are there to set an example of devotion to duty which rises superior to any personal consideration. The members of the Civil Service themselves are not able to obtain leave on urgent private affairs unless they have earned that privilege by a definite term of service, and it is, therefore, often the case—it certainly was in my experience—that these men are obliged to stick to their posts in the face of very serious personal inconvenience, and even in circumstances of tragic domestic trouble. The Governor would not be in a position to exhort them to persist in this duty if he himself were able, with much less difficulty, to go home on private affairs when it happened to suit him.

These considerations, my Lords, seem to me to far outweigh any that have been advanced on the other side, and I rejoice sincerely that the Secretary of State does not intend to depart from the established policy of the India Office.

LORD WENLOCK: My Lords, at this late hour I do not intend to inflict a long speech upon your Lordships, but with regard to this particular matter—which is one on which I have a certain amount of knowledge—I may be permitted to inform your Lordships that I quite agree with the views expressed by my noble friend (Lord Ampthill). Lord Cromer, who spoke from his knowledge of official life, made a great point of the fact that he considers that all these high officials should spend a longer period of their lives in their various official kingdoms. He thought that if the Governors of Bombay and Madras, the Viceroy, and the Commander-in-Chief could be allowed to extend their services for a longer period than five years it would be a very great advantage to the country, in that they would be able to bring to bear upon their various duties the experience and knowledge which take them now so long to accumulate, and which they have so short a time to exercise. There I think he is perfectly right, and if the term of office could be lengthened in the manner he proposes, I see no objection whatever to their coming back to England at stated intervals or for stated periods. The noble Earl himself was in Egypt for twenty-four years, and it is naturally impossible to suppose that anyone could remain absent for twenty-four years without ever returning to England. But as things are at present, those of us who are sent to India are only sent there for five years, and I think it is most important that during that time they should never relax their duties in any way, because the time at their disposal is so very short that even a visit of three months to England would cut very largely into it. Although somebody might be acting for them during that time the policy and the responsibility would cease to be their own, and would be somebody else's. It is perfectly true that during late years, since the Acts alluded to by Lord Lamington were passed, conditions have very much altered, but I think it should be remembered that the people of India themselves have not altered; the people themselves are very much what they were a hundred or a thousand years ago, and the problems which the Government of the country have to face are very much the problems that were in existence a very long time ago. True, railways, the telegraphs, and various means of communication have been facilitated in a great many ways, but the feelings of the people are very much what they were, and the conditions which the Governors and those in authority have to face are very much now what they were a hundred years ago, and more. I need only just refer to the fact that I see the papers have announced, in the last few days, serious trouble as arising in a part of the country which Lord Ampthill and I know very well, in the South of India, and I think it would be a matter of extreme anxiety to the Governor of that Presidency if he were at this moment on a three months or six months leave to England. I think this sort of things point to the fact that it is most important that if you are only to go out for five years to India, you should spend the whole of your five years upon the spot as long as you have health and strength to carry out your work. I say this feelingly, because towards the end of the time I was in India circumstances arose at home which would have made it exceedingly convenient for me if I could possibly have come away; I found myself mixed up with litigation on a very serious matter in which my financial affairs were very closely involved, and from that point of view it was most important for me to have come home if I possibly could have done so, and attended to my own private affairs. But on the whole I consider it very much better that a Governor, during the short time he is sent out to administer the affairs of a Presidency, should never be allowed for a single moment to turn away from the work of government with which he has been entrusted, or to relax the vigilance which he exercises over his Presidency. For these reasons, my Lords, I agree with the view expressed by the noble Lord who has spoken on behalf of the Government.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I feel some embarrassment in rising after four noble Lords who have held the office of Viceroy, but perhaps I may be allowed to intervene for one moment, because this matter was brought up before the late Government. Your Lordships must realise that there must be, in the minds of any Government considerable doubt, and it is quite impossible for us to speak with such certainty as Lord Ampthill on a subject of this character. It is impossible not to recognise that there are, or may be, great advantages to a Government in having occasional personal conferences with officials with whom they are in almost hourly correspondence in India. That must be so in military matters in the case of the Commander-in-Chief, and I am not sure that, even if no other change is proposed, it would not be desirable for the Commander-in-Chief, considering the great advances which have been made in military science, to come home occasionally to confer with the authorities here. Perhaps that may be considered a fitting question to be considered by the authorities by itself.

Then there is a second question, on which great stress was laid by Lord Cromer, who pointed out the enormous extent to which work has developed and increased in India during the last few years; and I do not doubt that to any man who takes up the appointment of Governor of Bombay or of Madras there is an immense strain in having to do that work for five years without a change. But, my Lords, I should not be acting fairly if I did not say that my conviction is that whatever restrictions you may place on the holiday which it is possible to obtain, whether you put it on the ground of convenience to the public, or of ill-health, or of urgent private affairs, in practice every Viceroy and every Governor of Bombay and Madras who goes out will have a holiday during the period of five years. Therefore I should treat the matter from the point of view that it is an appointment which admits of that vacation, and I should look at it as to whether that is or is not desirable.

My Lords, I will not trouble the House (it is really a question for the Government) with regard to the other appointments, but I have one special claim to address your Lordships upon this subject—namely, that I am the only man alive who has had, as Secretary of State, to deal with two Viceroys at once—a Viceroy in India and a Viceroy in England—virtually though not actually a Viceroy—with whom His Majesty's Ministers were most anxious to consult upon all important topics. I think the position is not without difficulty. The greater the Viceroy, the more admirable his devotion to his duties while he is in India, the more certain it is that while he is away on a holiday, in whatever form it is taken, his opinion while away must be the governing factor in the policy to be pursued. You may send the Governor of Bombay or of Madras to Calcutta, thereby to some extent necessarily interfering with the progress of business in Bombay or Madras, but whatever happens during the period of his absence, even in a case such as that of the noble Lord, Lord Curzon—whose absence, owing to the special circumstances of the case, was far more prolonged than that which was contemplated under the present proposal—even under those circumstances it would be impossible, nothwithstanding the complete confidence that His Majesty's Government had in Lord Ampthill, that there should not be an immense amount of reduplication work, and that is the difficulty. The work is so severe that it would be a real advantage if a holiday could be taken; on the other hand it is so incessant that there is a difficulty in transferring it for a short period to somebody else. If I had to make a comparison, I should venture to suggest that the work of the Viceroy (and I think I could quote words of Lord Curzon which would bear me out) is in many respects more detached from that of other officials, more personal, and more incessant, than even that of Prime Minister of this country; and the more that is true, the more that work is concentrated, as it must be, in the Viceroy in India, the more difficult do we find it to conceive how it would be possible, say, for the Prime Minister of this country to go to India for three months during the term of his office. Those are the considerations which prevented the late Government from coming to a conclusion in favour of the suggested change, although, as I stated at the outset, many considerations appeared to us to warrant some reconsideration of the present position.

LORD LAMINGTON: Everybody has assumed that the Viceroy and Governor are appointed for a term of five years; but as a matter of fact there is no limitation at all—they are appointed without any reference to the duration of their office, and therefore the prolongation of their office is a matter which presents no difficulty; it could be held for twenty years. With what the noble Viscount (Viscount Midleton) has just said about the complexity and the multitudinousness of the duties of the Viceroy I quite agree, and I am perfectly confident that no man, except under great stress of circumstances, would willingly leave his post.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: This is quite irregular.

LORD LAMINGTON: I beg the noble Earl's pardon.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): It is a little irregular for the noble Lord to reply before the debate has been replied to for the Government, but I did not wish to interrupt the noble Lord.

With regard to the question of the term of the office, no doubt what the noble Lord has just said is true, as I know from the warrant I received; no term appears in that document; but five years is the accepted period for a Viceroy's appointment and for the other appointments with which we are dealing, and therefore I think we may take it that for practical purposes there are five years appointments.

My Lords, I feel that it is difficult to approach this matter altogether impersonally. Those of us who have had experience in India must naturally draw upon our experience; those who have not had experience in India cannot fail to speak without the experience which we think we possess. With regard to the officers named in the Question of the noble Lord, I should like to point out in the first place that they do not all stand on exactly the same footing, except for one reason, and that I admit is an important one. I think that for the Governors of Madras and Bombay a solution might be found, but the reason I refer to is an important one, because it is an historical one, and that is the division of India into the three Presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. Had it not been for that, and if it was not necessary to retain that, I have sometimes thought that there was no reason why the provinces of Bombay and Madras should not be under the direction of Lieutenant-Governors, and in that case the difficulty of the noble Lord might have been obviated.

But, my Lords, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in my opinion stand alone—I think the expression has been used—and naturally for my part, I must speak specially with reference to the Viceroy, although I hold that the argument applies to the Commander-in-Chief *mutatis mutandis*. I wish to say at once that of course I can imagine certain circumstances which would create in any officer holding those positions an intense desire—an overwhelming desire—to return to Europe. It may proceed from health, or it may proceed from private reasons. But I cannot myself believe with the noble Earl, Lord Cromer, that the consideration of this point can have deterred many men who were willing to undertake the duties of these offices, and personally I am quite unable to concur in the demand for the relaxation of the rule which the noble Lord has advocated. I cannot help thinking that the arguments which are based upon the leave privileges of other members of the Service in India ignore the true cause of differentiation. It is quite true, of course, that the three months which now prevail suffice for a very short and rapid return to this country, and it is true also that men even in the highest ranks of the Indian Civil Service are able to avail themselves of these privileges. But even with regard to the Indian Civil Service I have my doubts—I had my doubts when I was in India—whether that system was altogether an advantage to the public service, whatever it might be to the individual. I am sure that the noble Lord, Lord Curzon, must have had some such experiences as I had. Time after time, when going through the country, I came upon men who were holding acting appointments, and who were not the men who were properly appointed to those particular posts; and I remember I said publicly before I left India that I thought there were grave dangers and grave inconveniences to the public service, which might have to be considered with reference to that particular state of affairs.

Now, my Lords, returning to the comparison of the Indian civil servant and the Viceroy, I would point out that the Indian civil servant is a man who has had long experience in India—as a man in the higher ranks of the service, at any rate—who has served in all parts of the country; and, though the senior members of them may, for that reason, be argued to be inured to the dangers of the climate, my belief is that very often the danger then comes upon them at a moment which they cannot foresee. On the other hand you have the Viceroy. He is fresh to India, and he has to serve there for a definite period of five years—with all respect to the noble Lord (Earl Cromer) —and he knows perfectly well what he is undertaking. I would point out also that he is not, like the ordinary civil servant, exposed to hot weather in the plains, but is, from the accustomed arrangements, able to transact his business during that period of danger in localities, which, in my opinion, are second to none in giving opportunities for hard work. My Lords, I venture to think that in those circumstances the application of the argument that because these privileges are given to the Indian civil servants, therefore they ought to be extended to the Viceroy, is not a complete one.

Then, my Lords, I should like to say a word with regard to what would happen supposing this change were carried out. We are to contemplate the Viceroy going on leave for three months, and we have been told by the noble Lord (Lord Curzon) this afternoon, that he would suggest, to fill the place of the Viceroy during that period, not a high official like the Governor of Madras, because—and naturally because—it is difficult to

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suppose that one could summon the Governor of Madras for so short a period, but that he would rely upon the senior ordinary member of the Viceroy's Council. My Lords, I wish to speak with all respect—with affection, if I may—of the members of the Viceroy's Council, but they are not chosen for a succession like that, and I venture to think that it might perhaps not increase confidence in the Government, either here or in India, if the succession to the Viceroyalty, at the time that the Viceroy took leave, was to be left to the mere chance of who was the senior among the officers who were appointed for entirely different reasons.

LORD LAMINGTON: It used to be done—it used to be the rule.

THE EARL OF ELGIN: My Lords, I should like to put, as shortly as I can, why I think it would also be inconvenient for the Viceroy to be summoned home for consultation with the home Government. It has been said that the position of the Viceroy is unique, and I think it is so. The Viceroy is probably almost invariably strange to India when he gets there, and yet he is the head of a Government which is composed of men who have had long service in India, and who know it from top to bottom. On the other hand, he must at the same time be the representative there of the home Government. Now, my Lords, how is that provided for? It is provided for by the arrangement, I think, that the Viceroy, and the Viceroy alone of his Government, has the right of private correspondence with the Secretary of State. That is a well understood and perfectly recognised arrangement to which no objection is ever taken, but the Viceroy at that time is in close communication with his colleagues, and sees them every day, and of course enters freely with them into discussion of policies. My Lords, it appears to me that the transfer of the Viceroy to London would alter the whole conditions. The personal element in that case would overshadow everything, and I believe myself that it would be false in principle, and detrimental to the constitutional relations between the Viceroy and the Government of India.

My Lords, I do not think that I need say more to justify my adherence to the answer which the noble Lord (Earl Beauchamp) has given on behalf of the Secretary of State for India. After all, it appears to me that there is a very strong preponderance of opinion in support of continuing matters as they now stand. We have had many names quoted this afternoon, amongst them those of Lord Northbrook and of a former Leader of the House of Commons, Mr. W. H. Smith. We have had the noble Lord opposite, and the noble Lord who spoke below the gangway, and on the other side we have the two noble Lords now on the cross benches, and we have had mentioned the case of Lord Cromer, which, at any rate partly supported them.

***LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON**: And also Lord Salisbury.

THE EARL OF ELGIN: I was going to mention that, with all deference to the noble Lord. With regard to that, we have had a statement from the noble Lord (Lord Cross) who said, in explaining his Bill of 1892, that it especially excluded the Viceroy, and at any rate only gave permission for a return from India for public reasons.

***LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON**: No, the Bill did not exclude the Viceroy; it applied to all the officers, but in consequence of Lord Northbrook's contention in this House, Lord Cross, in order to meet him, withdrew the name of the Viceroy from the schedule; but the Bill as originally introduced and supported by Lord Salisbury included the Viceroy as well as the other officials.

THE EARL OF ELGIN: I did not quite follow the exact sequence, but as a matter of fact the Bill as it passed this House did not include the name of the Viceroy.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 17*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.

1. "That, in the case of the London United Tramways, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

2. "That, in the case of the Ards and Bangor Railways, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the condition that the powers to construct Railways No. 3 and 3A are struck out of the Bill, and that the fact that a deposit equal to 5 per cent. of the amount of the estimate of expense in respect of the remaining railways proposed to be authorised has been made with the Accountant-General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland be proved before the Committee on the Bill: That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

3. "That, in the case of the Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, on the condition that Clauses 53 to 58, inclusive, are struck out of the Bill: That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with.

4. "That, in the case of the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords], Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the promoters have leave to insert the additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

5. "That, in the case of the Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

6. "That, in the case of the West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill on the condition that all Tramways are struck out of the Bill in respect of which the consents of the Local and Road Authorities, to the extent to which they are necessary under Standing Order 22, are not proved before the Committee to whom the Bill is referred: That the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

7. "That, in the case of the Leith Burgh Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

8. "That, in the case of the South-West Suburban Water Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of 'Metropolitan Water Board,' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to provide for a Superannuation Scheme for officers and servants of the Great Western Railway Company in substitution for the Great Western Railway Superannuation Fund established under the provisions of the Great Western Railway Act, 1864." Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [Lords].

Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS (No. 2) BILL.

Petitions against: From Edinburgh; Huddersfield; and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; to lie upon the Table.

HOME WORK REGULATION BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, against; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Petition from Lisburn, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petition from Tiverton, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Hodnet; Swindon; and Usher's Wiltshire Brewery, Limited; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Helmshore; and Kirkcudbright; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Kirkcudbright, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Petitions for prevention: From Caithness; and, Golspie; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Worksop, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Buckhaven, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Copy presented, of List of Public Elementary Schools in single school Parishes as defined in Section 3 (6) of the Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (LAND REVENUE).

Copy presented, of Land Revenue Assessments in the Punjab since 1855 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

County Court Rules.—Copy of the County Court Rules, dated 13th March, 1908 [by Act].

Workmen's Compensation Rules.—Copy of the Workmen's Compensation Rules, dated 14th March, 1908 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Close Time for Seine Trawl Nets.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary of Scotland whether in view of the facts that four out of the five official fishery districts of the Clyde are desirous of a close time for the seine trawl net from 1st February to 15th May, and that the Clyde herring merchants also support this course, he will take steps to bring about this line of action.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am informed that the Board have no official information that the fishermen in four out of the five Clyde fishery districts are in favour of a close time for the seine net; but I shall, of course, be glad to receive and consider any further information which may be forthcoming.

Seed Corn for Scottish Farmers.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware of the fact that, owing to the inclement harvest, seed corn in some places in Shetland is practically unobtainable; and if he will state on what terms the Congested Districts Board can assist.

MR. J. DEWAR (Inverness): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that, owing to the inclement season experienced in the Highlands of Scotland last year, the grain in those districts was seriously damaged, and there is difficulty in procuring reliable seed; and will he, under these circumstances, confer with the Congested Districts Board as to the possibility of helping to procure sound and satisfactory seed.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am aware of the regrettable facts stated by my hon. friends. As the Congested Districts Board is not a relief body they have no power to expend their funds in providing seed, and they have, therefore, reluctantly refused applications for that purpose. For their special statutory purpose of the improvement of agriculture they have on occasions provided seed corn and seed potatoes, but in such cases payment of the price is required when the request is granted.

Proof Spirits in Temperance Drinks.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the number of samples of herb beer and other beverages sold as temperance drinks analysed at the Government laboratory during the past three years; the number found to contain more than 2 per cent. of proof spirit; and the percentage of proof spirit there disclosed.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*)

Herb and Botanic Beer and similar Beverages examined in the Government Laboratory.

Year to 31st March.	Total number of samples examined.	Number of samples containing proof spirit in excess of legal limit of 2 per cent.	Containing proof spirit of More than 2 per cent. but less than 3 per cent.	Containing proof spirit of 3 per cent., but less than 4 per cent.	Containing proof spirit of 4 per cent., but less than 6 per cent.	Containing proof spirit of 6 per cent., or more.	Highest percentage of proof spirit contained in one sample.
1905 -	1,011	361	233	78	42	8	8·3 ginger beer.
1906 -	924	349	248	58	35	8	9·5 ginger beer.
1907 -	1,133	422	306	71	37	8	10·5 herb beer. 12·3 dandelion stout.
1st April, 1907, to 10th Mar., 1908.	1,079	417	298	81	32	6	8·5 herb beer.
Total -	4,147	1,549	1,085	288	146	30	

Suggested Railway from Chaman to Kuskh.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary of State for India what is the distance between the terminus of the India railway at Chaman and that of the Russian railway at Kuskh; what is the length of the nearest practicable route for linking them together; and whether any proposals have been made for so doing.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The distance between Chaman and Kuskh in a straight line is about 400 miles. I am unable to say what is the length of the shortest practicable route, and, as regards the railway project, I stated the other day that I had no knowledge of the subject beyond a reference to it I had seen in a newspaper.

Rioting at Tinnevelly.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can give the House any information regarding a riot at Tinnevelly.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I am informed that a riot occurred at Tinnevelly on Saturday last, in which the municipal, post, and police offices were looted and burnt. Being unable to clear the streets the magistrate and superintendent of police ordered the police to fire, and the rioting then ceased. Four casualties were reported.

Damage to Fishing Nets by Foreign Trawlers.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that on Wednesday, 5th February, the fishing boat "Bonaigen," of Wick, while fishing in the Moray Firth about seven miles off the Caithness coast, had five nets carried away, and eight nets along with fishing ropes destroyed by the trawler "Bangkok," of Gotheburg, the loss as valued amounting to £68 10s.; whether he is aware that several similar losses have been sustained this winter off the coast of Caithness by fishing boats in consequence of their nets being cut through and destroyed by foreign trawlers; and what steps he proposes to take for the protection of fishermen's property, and vindication of their rights against foreigners.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member for Wick Burghs on 12th instant.

The Government and the Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that last year instructions were given by the Secretary for Scotland to block the Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill, will he state whether it is his intention to adopt a similar course this session.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair*). The attitude of the Government towards the Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill must be the same as it was last year. The sympathies of the Government are strongly with any effort to enforce the law against illegal trawling, but the machinery for carrying out this purpose must be judged with due consideration of its effect upon the general interests of the mercantile marine, and with regard to the general principles upon which modern commercial undertakings are managed. The Bill provides for the suspension of the certificate of registration of the trawl vessel upon a breach of statute or bye-law; that is to say, a costly and powerful agent of production is put out of use, and the owners, shareholders, mortgagees, and crews of the vessels are all punished for what might be entirely the fault of the skipper, seeing that the control exercised by owners over their skippers must be limited when the trawler has gone to sea. For these reasons it is difficult to assent to this proposal. A further proposal is to cancel or suspend the certificate of the skipper or second officer for illegal trawling. The Board of Trade have always declined to recognise an offence of this kind as one of the class for which they would feel justified in thus dealing with a certificate granted under the Merchant Shipping Act.

Petition of Workmen in Pembroke Dockyard.

MR. OWEN PHILIPPS (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can now give replies to the petitions of workmen at the Pembroke Dockyard, which were presented to the Admiralty in January, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) It is hoped that the replies will be announced early next month.

New Heater Torpedo.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the new heater torpedo gives an increased speed of over 33 per cent. for torpedoes fired at a ship 1,500 yards off, 44 per cent. at over 3,000 yards off, and over 50 per cent. at over 4,000 yards off; and whether, under these circumstances, he will endeavour to cancel all orders for torpedoes of old-fashioned type without heaters.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The Admiralty are fully aware of the increased efficiency of modern Whitehead torpedoes, but it is not in the public interest to detail the steps taken by the Department as the result of these improvements.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware of the activity of foreign navies in ordering the new heater torpedoes invented by the Whitehead firm since the Russo-Japanese War; and in view of the reduction of the Vote for torpedoes and guncotton from £394,000 in 1906–7 to £307,000 in 1907–8, and £209,000 for the new financial year, whether he can state if any of the new heater torpedoes have been ordered for the British Navy.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The Answer to both Questions is in the affirmative.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether torpedoes are being manufactured at Weymouth and supplied to a foreign Power whose speeds and radius of action are far superior to the Admiralty pattern of torpedo, either cold or hot; and, if so, why the usual proportion of orders for torpedoes was last year altered in favour of the Government establishment at Woolwich.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The reply to the first Question is in the negative, and the second Question therefore does not arise.

Fusing of Wires on the District Railway.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to one or two outbreaks of fire occurring recently upon the District Railway; and whether he will ask the directors to post up notices in the carriages, &c., telling the passengers what to do in case of fire.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) My attention has been called to several cases of fusing on this railway, which, however, can hardly be described as "outbreaks of fire." A notice of the kind suggested would, in the opinion of my advisers, be more likely to create alarm than to add to the security of passengers.

Schools Earning Special Gardening Grant.

SIR F. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Education what number of elementary schools in England and Wales earned the special grant for gardening; and what was the number of pupils in the years 1904–5, 1905–6, 1906–7, and 1907–8, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) In 1905–6 there were 579 public elementary schools in England and Wales obtaining the Board's special grant for gardening, with 8,359 scholars; in 1905-6 there were 749 schools, with 11,216 scholars. These figures are contained in the published Blue-books of the Board. For 1906–7 the numbers notified to the Board at the beginning of the special subjects year were 974 schools, with an estimated number of scholars 14,926. For 1907–8 the number of schools notified as taking this subject is 1,138, the number of scholars being not yet obtainable.

Agricultural Instruction in Schools.

SIR F. CHANNING: To ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state what is the present number of school gardens provided for elementary, secondary, and evening schools, respectively, in England and Wales; in how many of such schools gardens are arrangements made for fruit cultivation as well as for gardening; and what is the number of detached demonstration or experimental fruit plots to which pupils of schools have access.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The number of public elementary schools in England and Wales notified to the Board for the purpose of the grant for gardening is 1,138, each of which, of course, has ground specially devoted to the purposes of school gardening; but there are in addition a number of schools in which gardening is carried on more as a part of nature study than for the purpose of teaching gardening as such, and the gardens of these schools are not included in that number. Few secondary schools have school-gardens intended to teach practical gardening to the scholars, but several schools in England (and one or two in Wales), the curricula of which are regarded by the Board as having a distinctly agricultural character, have land for outdoor demonstration and experimental work in plant life; and a number of other secondary schools in England possess gardens which are utilised in connection with the biological teaching. The applications for recognition of evening school gardening classes for the current year have not yet all been received, but assuming that the applications still to be received will correspond with last year, the number will amount to about 190 in England and Wales. It is impossible to say in how many of the elementary and evening school gardens arrangements are made for fruit cultivation, as few counties have any uniformity of practice in this respect, but it is probably about half. In only two of the secondary schools referred to in the second paragraph above is provision made for the systematic teaching of fruit culture. As far as I am informed, to only one of the detached fruit stations in the country have the pupils of any public elementary, secondary, or evening schools regular access for practical instruction.

Training of Nurses.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what proofs of efficient teaching, of efficient examining, and of the possession of adequate *matériel* and of a capable and industrious staff, do the Local Government Board require before sanctioning any hospital for the training of nurses, whether trained or merely qualified; and whether they would take the medical profession generally into their confidence on those points.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Under the Local Government Board's Nursing Order, 1901, a trained nurse means any person who has resided for not less than two years in a general clinical or other hospital recognised by the Board, and who, after examination, has obtained from such hospital a certificate of proficiency in nursing; and the term qualified nurse means any person, who, after examination, has obtained a certificate of proficiency in nursing from any (1) public general hospital, or (2) workhouse infirmary and fever hospital, or (3) nursing institution, that may be recognised by the Board as an efficient school for medical and surgical nurses. The Board require as evidence of the due training or qualification of a nurse, the production of the original certificate of proficiency from a recognised hospital. Before recognising for the purpose in question any hospital other than a general clinical hospital the Board make careful inquiries respecting such hospital. The Board have always received and welcomed assistance from the medical profession, both as regards the general question of recognition of the training of nurses and as regards the capacity for teaching of any particular hospital. It may be added that a general clinical hospital is one recognised by examining bodies for the instruction of medical students.

Purchase Price of Sir H. Shaw-Stewart's Land.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the Secretary of State for War what was the price obtained from Sir Hugh Shaw-Stewart for the land, near Cloch Point, which was resold to him in 1907 after having been purchased in 1905 for £13,050.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The price was £10,000.

Army Reductions.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what reduction in *personnel* will result from the intended withdrawal in the course of 1908–9 of a cavalry regiment and four infantry battalions from South Africa.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The net reduction in *personnel* will amount to thirty-three officers and 1,671 other ranks.

Territorial Army—Instruction of Officers on the Unattached List.

MR. C. H. CORBETT (Sussex, East Grinstead): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers of the Territorial Force, placed on the unattached lists of their counties, will be allowed to attend courses of instruction in order to maintain their military efficiency pending absorption.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A General Officer Commanding-in-Chief will be empowered to authorise the attendance at courses of instruction of such officers should he consider it desirable, and should the funds at his disposal admit of it.

Changes in the Army Accounts Department.

SIR J. BETHELL (Essex, Romford): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether important changes in the Army Accounts Department and the Army Pay Department are being contemplated;

and, if not, whether he can see his way to make a statement which will set at rest the uneasiness prevailing among members of those Departments.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Certain changes in the Army Accounts Department are under consideration, and I hope to be able to arrive at a decision at no distant date.

Pay and Position of Civil Service Assistant Clerks.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Prime Minister whether he has received a petition asking for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the pay and prospects of assistant clerks in the Civil Service; whether he has considered what action the Government will take in this matter; and whether he is aware that the higher permanent Treasury and other officials have sometimes disregarded the decisions of Parliamentary Committees and likewise sometimes failed to carry out the suggestions made by Ministers regarding various Departments.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer which the Prime Minister gave on 23rd April last to a similar Question by my hon. friend the Member for the Tottenham Division of Middlesex. I am not aware of the evidence upon which the hon. Member bases the allegation contained in the last paragraph of his Question.

Lunatics and the Law of Divorce.

MR. DUNN (Cornwall, Camborne): To ask the Prime Minister, whether he is aware that, according to a recently published Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, of 123,988 persons certified as incurably insane in England and Wales, over 40 per cent. are married, and that consequently upwards of 57,000 persons are thus condemned by law to enforced celibacy; and whether, having regard to the fact that the greater number of such persons are in poor circumstances and to the evils arising from the existing state of the law, he will afford facilities for the consideration of the Bill for the amendment of the present law of divorce.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) My right hon. friend has ask me to answer this Question for him. The number of persons certified to be insane and known to be under care is, I understand, as stated. Of the males so certified, the official statistics show that 47·6 were married, and of the females, 45 per cent. These persons, however, are not certified as incurably insane and a proportion of them recover. The Government cannot undertake to afford facilities for the consideration of the Bill for the amendment of the present law of divorce.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Mechanical Training Expenditure.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty under which Vote will the cost of the mechanical training establishment appear.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): Votes 1, 2, 5, 8, and 10.

Engine-Room Artificers at Chatham.

MR. C. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state why the Chatham depot is unable to secure sufficient engine-room artificers for their local requirements.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The number of engine-room artificers allotted to Chatham for the current year has already been obtained, and no difficulty is anticipated in obtaining the number required for next year.

Stokers and the Short-Service System.

MR. C. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what percentage of stokers joined last year under the short-service system; and to what percentage of this number it is proposed to allow to continue service to qualify for pensions.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Answer to the first Question is about 60 per cent. No limit has been placed to the number of special service stokers who may be transferred to continuous service and qualify for pensions under the regulations.

H.M.S. "Indus."

MR. C. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the cost of officers, petty officers, and pensioned instructors.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Assuming that the Question refers to the "Indus," the Answer is, approximately, £16,000, exclusive of liability for retired pay and pensions, calculated at £6,000.

Battleship Practice.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the reason why the Battle Practice Return has been issued before the whole Fleet have completed the practice.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: This annual return is published as early in the year as possible; but in some cases, where ships have been unable to complete their practice within the year, they must necessarily be omitted.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman state the names of the vessels omitted?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Not off-hand, but I will get information for the noble Lord.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether in future years the Admiralty will arrange that the Battle Practice Return shall include a column denoting the weather conditions, and also the motion of the ship.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: This, with other suggestions, will be considered in the general revision of the return which takes place every year.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): When will the revision take place?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I cannot say.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: How can you properly test the efficiency under the present system?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked for notice of that Question.

H.M.S. "Hannibal."

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the "Hannibal," which is shown as being second in the battle practice in the Home Fleet list, carried out two battle practices; and, if so, which was the practice the results of which are given in the Return; and what were the particulars of the other practice.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: No, Sir; this ship carried out one battle practice only.

Mufti for Naval Officers.

MR. MALLET (Plymouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will consider the possibility of granting to certain ranks of naval men the privilege of wearing plain clothes when on leave, which is now given to certain ranks in the Army.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The question will be considered.

The Channel Fleet.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the Channel Fleet, having assembled at Portland for one of its annual cruises, left Portland on 11th March with three battleships, two armoured cruisers, one unarmoured cruiser, and ten destroyers short of strength; and whether he can state the reason of the absence of so many vessels without replacement.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The cruisers and one battleship were undergoing their annual refit. Another battleship was delayed for two days on special duty, and the third was left behind as she is about to be relieved. The destroyers were complete, except that three were docking, but have since left to rejoin the Fleet, and one was under repair. The remaining six were nucleus crew vessels which were not intended to proceed with the Fleet.

Army Interpreters.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: On behalf of the hon. Member for West Bristol, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers in His Majesty's Auxiliary Forces may be entitled to the grant, hitherto refused them, for passing the examination as Army interpreters in foreign languages.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The Royal Warrant for pay only permits the grant of money to officers of the Regular Forces. I am afraid that I cannot undertake to make the concession suggested in the Question. The funds at present at my disposal are hardly sufficient to meet the requirements of the Regular Army in this respect.

Partition of Bengal.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, having regard to the unsettled condition of Eastern Bengal, manifested by disturbances in Tipperah, Mymensingh, Pubna, Backergunge, and other places, which are all attributable to and connected with the opposition of the people to the separation of their province from Bengal, to the increase in police and gaol expenditure occasioned thereby, and to the necessity of falling back on the old and forgotton tradition of appointing military officers as civil superintendents of police, to the growing and dangerous alienation between local officials and the people, due directly to the same cause, and to the ill-feeling between Mahomedans and Hindus, of which there was no trace in former times, also due to the same cause, he will take into his consideration the advisability of appointing a Commission, representative of all parties interested, to inquire into and submit a scheme for modifying the partition of Bengal, with special reference to the appointment of a Governor and Council for Bengal, in accordance with the intention of the Statute of 1853 (16 and 17 Vic., c. 95), and the delegation to certain local authorities of powers corresponding to those which, under the Indian Act V., of 1868, obtain in Scinde, as was suggested by his predecessor in office.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): I have nothing to add to what I have already said on this subject, but I must not be understood to admit the existence of a connection as of cause and effect between the various sets of facts alleged by my hon. friend. As for appointing a Commission, I am of opinion that the question is one that can only be settled by His Majesty's Government on their own responsibility.

SIR H. COTTON: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman holds out no hope of reconsidering this question?

MR. MORLEY: I think I had better adhere to the language I have always used on this subject.

SIR H. COTTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he recalls the assurance of the Prime Minister that, if new facts were brought to light, the Government would be in a position to reconsider the matter, and whether the facts stated in my Question are not new within the meaning of that assurance?

MR. MORLEY: If new facts are brought to my notice I will consider them, but the facts cited by the hon. Member do not seem to me to come under that description.

SIR H. COTTON gave notice that on an early date he would call attention to the grievous evils which had resulted in India from the partition of Bengal, and move a Resolution.

Famine in Orissa.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether his attention has been called to the fact that several deaths have occurred in the village of Madhupur, Orissa, from starvation; and whether he will urge upon the Government of India the necessity of making further and sufficient provision to relieve the famine-stricken people.

MR. MORLEY: The distress caused by heavy floods in part of Orissa, where the Madhupur estate is situated, has been the subject of careful inquiry. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, after visiting the locality, satisfied himself that the accounts which had appeared in the newspapers were exaggerated, and that the relief measures taken by the local authorities were adequate. I do not propose to interfere.

The Thakurs of Bikanir.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he is aware that in 1870 the Thakurs of the State of Bikanir petitioned the Government of India regarding the forcible resumption by the Bikanir Raj of lands held by the Thakurs, and the levying of assessments in excess of those fixed, and that thereupon the Government of India intervened and settled the dispute; that in 1872 Sir Edward Bradford, then political agent at Jeypur, was deputed to inquire into the complaints preferred in that year of non-compliance with the orders and directions given by the Government of India in 1870, and that in 1883, further disputes having arisen between the Bikanir Raj and the Thakurs, a special committee was appointed by the political agent in Bikanir and the agent of the Governor-General in Rajputana to adjudicate upon all such disputes relating to lands confiscated by the Bikanir Raj; whether, having regard to these specific instances of interference by the Government of India in a matter of internal policy with the actions of the Maharaja of Bikanir, he will order an inquiry to be made into the case of Thakur Bhairon Singh and two others, nobles of that State, who have been kept strictly imprisoned within the fort at Bikanir since 2nd January, 1905, and whose estates have been confiscated as the result of various irregular proceedings, and on the alleged charge of seditious conduct in approaching the Government of India for redress of grievances connected with the curtailment of their established rights and privileges as nobles of the State; and whether, in view of the fact that two of these persons are still arbitrarily detained at Bikanir and prevented from taking any action on their own behalf, and that the estates of the third, who has died in confinement, are being withheld from his son and successor, he will ascertain what were the exact orders passed by the Maharaja of Bikanir in each case, what grounds exist for declining to communicate them to the persons affected thereby, and what is the evidence on which they are based.

MR. MORLEY: I am aware of the history during the period referred to in the first part of the Question. The disturbed state of the country between 1865 and 1883 reached a degree at times which necessitated the interference of the paramount Power in the internal affairs of the State to place the relations of the Maharaja and Thakurs on a stable basis. No conditions of misrule exist at present requiring a departure from the principle of non-interference. The Government of India have reported, as my hon. friend is aware, that a petition to them of the Thakurs had formed the subject of careful inquiry; that the case was not one in itself to justify a departure from the established policy of not interfering in the internal affairs of a Native State. I would point out that, as my hon. friend is already aware, one of the two persons described by him as "still arbitrarily detained" was released in August, 1906, and his landed property restored to him. In these circumstances I see no reason for instituting inquiries.

Opium Revenue in British India.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire. W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the revenue from opium consumed in British India increased by £235,217, or 35 per cent., during the ten years ending 1905–6, and that there has been a further increase since that year of £120,048; whether he can state what proportion of these increases is attributable to higher duties and success in combating contraband trade; what was the amount of licit opium issued for sale and consumption in India in 1895–6 and 1905-6, respectively; and what is the estimated amount for the current year.

MR. MORLEY: As regards the effect of higher duties I find that though there was an increase of 35 per cent. in revenue as mentioned by my hon. friend, the amount actually issued for sale and consumption increased by less than 12 per cent. In 1895–6 the quantity was 7,458 chests, and in 1905–6, 8,328 chests. These figures include Malwa opium as well as Bengal opium. I am unable to estimate the consumption of the present year. The proportion of the increased revenue due to suppression of the contraband trade cannot be statistically stated. But it is a material point that in Burma, which contributed four-fifths of the true increase of revenue during the period, and where alone licit consumption has largely increased, the existence of widespread smuggling was most notorious.

The Looting of the "Minota."

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been called to the looting of the colonial trading schooner "Minota" and the massacre of her captain by natives at Tulagi, in the Solomon Islands; if the Government has any man-of-war in the neighbourhood which can be sent there to restore order; and what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Mr. CHURCHILL): The Secretary of State has no official information as to this incident, but will inquire of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. As Tulagi is the headquarters of the resident Commissioner for the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, it may be presumed that any steps necessary to restore order have already been taken.

Transvaal Mineral Rights and Taxation.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the recommendation to tax unworked mineral rights in the Transvaal, made by the Committee on Unemployment in the Transvaal Mines; and whether he will obtain this Report and lay it upon the Table of this House.

MR. J. A. PEASE (for Mr. CHURCHILL): The Report of the Commission referred to has not been received at the Colonial Office at present, but inquiry shall be made with regard to it.

Colonial Grants-in-Aid.

MR. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will urge the Colonial Office to make inquiry into the present taxation of those Colonies which receive grants-in-aid, with a view to seeing whether the system of taxation in use in solvent Colonies could be so adapted to those insolvent Colonies that grants in-aid might no longer be needed.

MR. J. A. PEASE (for Mr. CHURCHILL): There is really very little difference in the system of taxation in Colonies whose conditions are generally similar such as the West Indian Islands, the fact that one Colony is solvent and another is at present in receipt of a grant-in-aid is not due to the system of taxation, but to other causes. The Estimates of the Colonies in receipt of grants-in-aid are most carefully reviewed every year by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Treasury, and every reasonable opportunity is taken of increasing the local revenue in order to make both ends meet. In spite of active development work considerable reductions have this year been effected upon the Colonial Office Estimates.

Panama Canal Labour.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies when the Report upon the conditions of indentured labour on the Panama Canal will be presented.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The hon. Member is probably referring to the Report, furnished last October by His Majesty's Minister at Panama, on the conditions of the British West Indian labourers employed on the Panama Canal. The Report will be laid before the House without delay, but I am unable to give an exact date.

Temperance Drinks.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the number of samples of herb beer and other beverages sold as temperance drinks analysed at the Government laboratory during the past three years; the number found to contain more than two per cent. of proof spirit; and the percentage of proof spirit there disclosed.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I have had a statement prepared giving the information asked for in tabular form, which will be circulated with the Votes to-morrow.

Alien Immigration Boards.

MR. ARMITAGE (Leeds, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what period the members of the alien immigration boards are appointed.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): The appointments of members of immigration boards under the Aliens Act, 1905, stand for as long as the persons appointed are willing and able to afford their services in that capacity.

MR. ARMITAGE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken for the formation of advisory committees to assist alien immigration boards, as promised by him on 5th March, 1906.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: My right hon. friend gave no promise in this matter. The question of arranging for the establishment of such advisory committees, for which there is no provision in the Act, was at one time considered, but after further experience of the working of the Act my right hon. friend does not think them necessary.

Grimsby Aliens Rejection.

MR. ARMITAGE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, on the 28th February, at Grimsby, a Russian named Itzig Woffenburg, with wife, daughter, and son, were rejected by the Grimsby Immigration Board; whether he had in his possession the sum of £43 12s.; whether he was going on a visit to his two daughters and a son-in-law in Edinburgh; and, if so, what the grounds were upon which the rejection took place.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: My right hon. friend is informed by the Grimsby Immigration Board that assuming the question to relate to an alien family named Koffenberg, the facts are as stated in the first two sentences thereof. It may be added that the man was aged sixty, the wife fifty-four, daughter fifteen, and the son five years. The alien stated that he was going on a visit as set out in the Question, but he had no letter to show in corroboration, and the Board who have the authority, and with the alien before them are in the best position, to judge having regard to his demeanour and the manner in which he answered questions put to him did not credit his statement and were of opinion that he intended to remain here with his family, and that having regard to his age and the number of his dependents there was no chance of his being able decently to support himself and his family.

Factory Inspectors.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any of the factory inspectors on probation, who have not yet passed an examination in factory law, have been entrusted with cases in Court involving questions of breaches of the factory law; and, if so, with what result.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The practice of the Department is for prosecutions to be undertaken by the more experienced inspectors in a district. I find that in only two cases have prosecutions been undertaken by inspectors who had not at the time passed the examination in factory law; in one case a conviction was obtained—the other case, which was taken by the junior inspector in an emergency, was dismissed.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Factory Department receives reports from inspectors and assistant inspectors showing the amount of time spent by them in office work, and in work out of offices of factory and workshop inspection; and whether he could state how the time of the inspectors and assistant inspectors for each division was distributed under these two heads for the month of January last.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The chief inspector receives annually from the divisions returns showing the amount of time spent in office work and inspection work respectively. The figures for a single month could only be obtained by calling for a special return which would involve a good deal of the clerical work which I infer from the Question the hon. Member deprecates: moreover the figures for a single month might not give a true average. I will see whether the tabulation of the figures for 1907 which have not been received can be expedited, and will communicate further with the hon. Member.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the possibility in the tabulation of showing month by month how the time is arrived at in this way?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Yes, if it does not involve an amount of labour out of proportion to the results.

Durham Mine Accident.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his intention to send a representative to the inquest to be held on 23rd March on the fourteen men who lost their lives at the Washington Glebe Colliery, in the county of Durham, on the 21st February.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Yes, Sir. The Home Secretary will be represented at the adjourned inquest by Mr. J. B. Atkinson, His Majesty's Inspector of Mines for the Newcastle district.

Blofield Maintenance Case.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been directed to the case of Frederick William Brown, who was sentenced to twenty-one days imprisonment at the Blofield petty sessions on the 9th instant for arrears under a maintenance order with respect to his father; and whether as the evidence showed the man only earned 12s. a week, he will consider the advisability of restricting the practice of some boards of guardians of compelling men in poor circumstances to contribute to the relief of their aged parents under the Poor Law and the fixing of a wage-limit below which prosecutions shall not take place.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I am informed that in the case referred to the father is an inmate of the workhouse, and that he has three sons who are young and unmarried men. They are receiving the average agricultural wages payable in the union at the present time, viz., 12s. a week, but there is no reason to believe that they did not receive the extra payments usual for harvest and summer work, which bring up the average wages for the year to 14s. or 15s. a week. The guardians considered that they ought to contribute 1s. per week each to the maintenance of their father. The matter is one for the guardians and the justices, and I have no authority to interfere with regard to it. Legislation would be necessary to enable effect to be given to the suggestion of my hon. friend, but, as I have stated on other occasions, the question of contributions by relatives is before the Poor Law Commission, and, pending their Report, I do not propose to introduce legislation on the subject.

Infantile Ophthalmia.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the large number of cases of blindness caused by ophthalmia of the new-born; whether he is aware that in the great majority of cases timeous treatment of this disease would prevent this result from ensuing; and whether he will take steps, by circular or otherwise, to induce the local authorities, under Section 7 of The Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889, to order that that Act shall apply to this disease.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware that timely treatment will prevent the blindness following on ophthalmia of the new-born. This is fully recognised in the rules of the Central Midwives Board, which direct a midwife in attendance at a confinement, in any case of inflammation of the eyes of the child, however slight, to explain to the husband or nearest relative or friend present that the case is one in which the attendance of a registered medical practitioner is required, and to give him a form for sending for such help. She must send a copy of this form to the Local Supervising Authority, who are thus made aware of the case. I would point out that the primary object of the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act is to prevent the spread of infection. This danger scarcely exists in cases of ophthalmia of the new-born. I am afraid that I could not properly take the precise course suggested by the noble Lord in the last part of the Question, but I am giving consideration to the whole subject.

Royston School Head Teacher.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether Mr. O. B. Milnes, whose appointment as Head Teacher to the Royston School was refused last year by the West Riding Local Education Authority on educational grounds, has now been appointed to the Bowers Allerton School at a higher salary by the same local authority; whether the educational grounds still exist; and what is the reason for this apparent change of opinion.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouth, N.): The Board have not received any intimation of Mr. Milnes's appointment to the school referred to, but I am inquiring of the Local Education Authority whether the appointment has in fact, been made.

Grant to Stranorlar Reinstated Tenant.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Patrick Hannigan, who was evicted from his holding on the estate of Alice A. Hayes, near Stranorlar, East Donegal, and after some time reinstated, was promised a grant from the Estates Commissioners to build up his farmhouses, by an inspector who visited his holding in 1906, which grant he has not yet received; and whether he can say when the grant will be paid to him, as he has lost some of his cattle for want of houses to shelter them.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners gave a free grant of £80 in Mr. Hannigan's case, namely, £53 15s. 0d. for buildings and £26 5s. 0d. for live stock. The whole of this amount has been expended, the last payment being made in January, 1907.

Mulcair Estate, Limerick.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that not long since Croker Barrington, Esquire, of Barrington's Bridge, Limerick, purchased from the late owner, Maunsell Dixon, an estate of 200 or 300 acres commonly called the Mulcair estate, convenient to where he lives; and will he get the Estates Commissioners to approach Mr. Barrington with a view of obtaining the estate for the benefit of the landless people of the locality.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners will make inquiries as to the estate referred to, and if it should be found suitable for their purposes they will approach the owner with a view to purchase.

NEW BILLS.

HOURS OF LABOUR (SURFACEMEN) BILL.

"To restrict the Hours of Labour of Surfacemen at collieries called upon to work seven days per week to eight hours per day," presented by Mr. Summerbell; supported Mr. Walsh, Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Glover, Mr. Parker, Mr. Jowett, Mr. Tyson Wilson, and Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 156.]

COSTS IN CRIMINAL CASES BILL.

"To consolidate and amend the Law as to costs in Criminal Cases," presented by Mr. Solicitor-General; supported by Mr. Secretary Gladstone, and Mr. Attorney-General; to be read a second time on Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 157.]

POOR LAW (COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTION EXEMPTION) BILL.

"To exempt in England and Wales certain poor persons from Compulsory Contributions to the Poor Law Guardians on account of the maintenance of relatives," presented by Mr. Lupton; supported by Mr. Luttrell, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Higham, Mr. Robert Price, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. John Ward, and Sir John Randles; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 158.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To extend and amend the Acts relating to Crofters' Holdings in Scotland, 1886 to 1891, and the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897; and for other purposes," presented by Mr. Cathcart Wason; supported by Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Leicester Harmsworth, Mr. Weir, Mr. Morton, Mr. Lamont, and Captain Waring; to be read a second time upon Monday, 4th May, and to be printed. [Bill 159.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee:—

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, the sum of £375,817 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

2. Resolved, "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, the sum of £44,355,400 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [10TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Second Resolution—£100,000 (supplementary), Board of Agriculture and Fisheries)—

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said that in reference to this Vote he felt compelled to press the hon. Gentleman in connection with a matter raised on the previous night, and that was the unsatisfactory manner in which the Board of Agriculture were administering the Order in connection with gooseberry mildew. The hon. Gentleman seemed to think it was sufficient to read out a portion of an Order so as to show that some arrangement had been made for destroying and pruning infected bushes. But only in the latter part of last summer the Board, in their Journal, in dealing with this very matter, declared that spraying as a means of checking the disease was not altogether satisfactory, as bushes previously affected had again shown the disease in spite of careful pruning. They had therefore come to the conclusion that it was only by the total destruction of the infected bushes that the disease could be extirpated. That was their opinion, and it was embodied in the first Order issued, but, subsequently to that issue, a deputation from different parts of the country waited on the Board, who, in consequence, relaxed the provisions of the Order and went back to a state of things which they themselves had declared was not satisfactory and did not secure immunity from the disease. Under the first Order the bushes could be destroyed, but under the second there was the alternative allowed of pruning and spraying instead of destroying. His interest was in a county in which up to the present there had been no outbreak of the disease, and the growers were extremely anxious to keep free from it. But supposing an outbreak should occur, they wanted to avoid the delay attendant on going to the Board and having a separate Order made, because they knew what serious delays often happened when the Board was asked to forbid things, and they fear that in the event of such delay the disease would go ahead in the county where, probably, there were more gooseberries grown than in any other county in the United Kingdom. He had to appeal to the Board to enable any county, on the application of the county council, to regulate its own actions in this matter, and, if it chose, to order the destruction of the infected bushes at once. They preferred that to trying those half measures which, in the opinion of the Board, were not only unsatisfactory but also most uneconomical, and which, too, in the opinion of most of those who were acquainted with the subject, would not bring about the results all desired to see attained. He wished to ask the hon. Gentleman for an undertaking that any county should have the privilege, at all events, of returning to the first policy of the Board, a policy which they considered satisfactory and one by which alone they believed immunity from the disease could be secured, whereas it could not be secured under the conditions laid down in the second Order issued by the Board. In connection with another point he would ask the hon. Gentleman if he could not see his way, when scheduling counties for disease, to schedule not merely the county, but the particular district and the number of acres infected, so that people might know exactly how far the disease had gone. Such a course would be of great help to those who interested themselves in the matter. Then he desired to refer to the question of milk-blended butter, and on that he hoped the hon. Gentleman, having had time for consideration, would be able to give a more satisfactory answer than he returned on the previous day, with regard to the manner in which the Board of Agriculture was exercising its right to allow certain names to be used for that article. They had mentioned on the previous day one very glaring case in which clearly the intentions of the Act had not been carried out, and he thought it very desirable that the Board should exercise more care in the selection of names. There was a large amount included in the Vote in connection with the subject of small holdings, and he thought they were entitled to ask for a clear statement from the Government with regard to the manner in which that money was to be expended. They had not, so far, been able to ascertain what were the objects for which the money was so immediately required. Indeed, so far as they could gather from the answers to the inquiries they had made, they were led to the conclusion that any expenditure under the Act likely to be incurred in the immediate future would have to be met by the unfortunate occupiers in the shape of an increase in the rent. Therefore they required more information as to the manner in which the money was to be spent. They wanted to know who would bear the cost of the preparations for carrying out the Act and of the valuations which undoubtedly would have to be made, with which cost it would obviously be unfair to hamper the new occupier in the first days of his occupation. They were well aware, of course, of the difficulty in which the hon. Gentleman was placed on the previous afternoon in being called upon to answer these questions in the absence of the real representative of the Board in that House, but, no doubt, now that he had had twenty-four hours reflection he would be able to give them more information.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): I will deal only with that portion of the hon. Member's speech in which he asks as to the allocation of the £100,000 promised last year and which, in accordance with that promise, is being provided in the Supplementary Estimate. As the hon. Member, no doubt, is aware, that £100,000 is to be paid into the Small Holdings Account of the Board of Agriculture, and, unlike ordinary Votes, no portion of it will be surrendered which may not have been paid out at the end of the financial year. There are three objects, which were fully stated in the debates in this House last year, to which this money is to be devoted. The first is the expense preliminary to the acquisition of the land, and, as I suggested yesterday, the Board will take a generous view of what are preliminary expenses in order to give as much assistance as they can to the county councils in the efforts which many of them are so readily making to put this Act into operation. The second object is the payment of any loss which may accrue to a county council which is voluntarily carrying out the provisions of the Act and which, having taken all reasonable precautions, still makes a loss on the transaction. That is in accordance with the promise which I gave to the Leader of the Opposition last year. Of course, it is a different matter where the Commissioners are compelled, if they are compelled at any time, to act in default of a county council which has failed in its duty. There, of course, the question of the payment of the whole or a part of the loss entailed will be a matter for consideration by the Board and the Treasury in conjunction with the county council, after full consideration of the circumstances which may have arisen.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the loss in respect of rent which the county council may incur during the period in which a small holding is being prepared will come out of the Central Fund?

*MR. HARCOURT: That is not a loss in the sense in which I am speaking. I will deal with that later on. The third object for which the £100,000 is intended, and, I think the only other object included in the Bill, is the making of grants to societies for the promotion of co-operation in connection with the cultivation of small holdings. The hon. Member has asked me as to the loss entailed by rent during the period the land is being prepared for the purposes of a small holding, and in regard to that I would point out that where you take a valuation or where a question of tillages arises the amount paid to the outgoing tenant is very often more than recovered by the ultimate harvesting of the crop, and therefore the residual loss to the county council would be a very small one, and, indeed there might be a profit on the proceeding. But, in my opinion, undoubtedly any loss so entailed would be treated as part of the cost of the equipment of the land and would be spread by the county council over a term of years in any financial arrangement by way of loan or otherwise which they may make for spreading the cost of the equipment over a given period.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: I was not alluding to valuations. I was alluding to the actual rent to be paid during the time the land is unoccupied and while it is being got ready for the new tenant.

*MR. HARCOURT: It is not quite clear that the land which is being got ready for the new tenant should, necessarily, become derelict during that time. The county council could easily make arrangements for the crops that may be in the ground to be gathered during that period. But still, if there is any loss during that period it obviously comes under the head of the cost of equipment. But the hon. Member must not assume that because some building or cottages are to be put up in a small corner of the holding, therefore the remainder of the land, either arable or pasture, cannot be occupied by the new holder. I do not see that there will be any serious difficulty in working the matter out in the way we suggest.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): How much of the £100,000 has been incurred this year? On two out of the three heads mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman, I understand no expenditure has been incurred.

*MR. HARCOURT: Probably some expenditure has been incurred, but I cannot say how much. Arrangements have been made in the Act so that this £100,000 goes into the Small Holdings Account of the Board of Agriculture, and if not spent this year it will be retained for future needs.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said the right hon. Gentleman had suggested that no loss would accrue by reason of the small landholder being prevented from occupying his holding while the buildings or houses were being erected. But that depended on whether or not the small holder was living in close proximity to the holding. In the event of a man living in a cottage in a village and taking a certain amount of land adjoining it, he might be able to occupy the small holding while the buildings he required were in course of erection. But that, too, largely depended on the time of the year and the nature of the holding. He understood the object of the Act was to increase the number of people on the soil and to bring more land into cultivation. But they would not be increasing the number of people on the soil if the small holdings were to be composed solely of grass land. Such a policy would, on the contrary, tend to diminish the number, and he presumed therefore that the holdings would be largely arable. In that event it was absolutely essential, unless it happened to be summer time, that there should be buildings on the land, for the cattle, horses, and pigs would have to be housed. [A laugh.] Hon. Gentlemen opposite might laugh, but he did not think they had ever shown themselves serious in this matter, or that they had ever realised the serious difficulties involved in arranging a small holding successfully. If they would only take the trouble to go into the villages and ask information from people acquainted with the land, who had lived and worked upon it, they would find that his statement was right; they would discover that a man could not make a small holding by simply digging up a piece of ground. There was a great deal to be done on the land before it could be made profitable. There was another point which ought to be considered, and that was how was the tenant going to live while the crops were growing. It had to be remembered that they did not come up in one night.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member is discussing a question which is not now before the House. He must confine himself to the expenditure of this £100,000.

SIR F. BANBURY said he desired to ask with regard to the expenditure of that money, how the loss in the valuation was going to be made up in the event of the county council allowing the small holder to spread his payments over a period of years. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that this was all provided for by the amount of the Vote. But he was inclined to think that that was an error, because the £100,000 was not to be an annual grant, it was a lump sum intended to provide for the preliminary expenses which might arise in establishing these small holdings. It was to be presumed that in course of time, what with the expenses of arbitration and valuation and other things in connection with a large number of small holdings, the £100,000 would be exhausted. There was no provision, however, in the Act such as there was in the Scottish Bill for an annual grant of money. Yet they must bear in mind that a valuation would take place whenever there was a change of tenancy, and that might occur pretty often, as it was not to be expected a man would remain on the holding for ever. Then there was the question of spreading these payments over a number of years, and he did not know how the right hon. Gentleman could justify such a policy as that unless he first threw over the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War, who had both expressly stated that they would not sanction this system of extended payments, because it was unsound finance. If it were unsound for the Army and Navy, surely it was equally unsound in the case of small holdings. He was glad to see the Secretary for War in his place. He hoped he would settle his difference with the First Commissioner of Works on this point in private, and then announce to the House what position the Government were going to take up on this very important financial question.

*MR. HARCOURT: I can only speak again, of course, by the leave of the House, but I am anxious immediately to relieve the mind of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London. He has said he would like us to settle in private the acute differences which he suggests have arisen between my colleagues and myself. Well, I prefer to do so in public. I think he misunderstood me yesterday. No doubt, it was my fault, but my remarks were directed entirely to the provisions of the Act by which the county councils are empowered to raise loans for two purposes. They are empowered to raise a loan for eighty years for the purchase of the land, and then they are empowered by the Bill to raise a loan for a term not exceeding fifty years for the equipment of the land. The valuation would come under the head of the necessary equipment of the land and it would be included in the loan raised for that purpose by the county council, and as that loan is only to be repaid by the tenant whoever he may happen to be, it will be spread over a period in the form of a small addition to the rent. I hope the hon. Baronet will not think my finance is so unsound as he suggests.

SIR F. BANBURY: I cannot see any difference between the finance of this Act and the raising of loans for naval and military works.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said he did not think they had yet got to the bottom of the question how that £100,000 was to be spent. They were told on the previous night that up to the present no expenses had been incurred under the Act, and to-day they were informed that possibly some had been incurred, but that the greater part of the money would be carried over to another year. If that were the case he ventured to assert that some of the supporters of the Government had been rather misleading the public by their speeches on this question. He saw that in the ordinary Estimates for this year there was no provision made for a continuance of the grant, or for a larger sum being used for the purposes of small holdings. But he had a leaflet in his hand dealing with the question of small holdings, and bearing the names of the hon. Members for Ilkeston and Northwich, in which it was said that for the three months ending March 1908, Parliament was to be asked to provide £100,000 for the purposes of the Act. Then he had a second leaflet issued by the Liberal Publication Department and written by the Member for the Rugby Division, in which it was pointed out that the £100,000 would only represent the expenditure for one quarter of the year. At the time these leaflets were being distributed in his constituency speeches were also being made which undoubtedly led people to suppose that £400,000 a year would be spent under the Act. What they were entitled to know was whether this £100,000 was intended to cover such expenses as the county council might return as having been incurred by them before the 31st March, or was it supposed to be a grant to cover such proportion of the expenses as might be incurred in the rest of the year. As no provision had been made in the ordinary Estimates was he right in thinking that none was intended to be made? If so, the people had been grossly deceived as to the amount of money to be spent for the purpose of the Act.

*Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said the Government, of course, did not feel that they were responsible for every statement made by their supporters in the country.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: Not for statements by the Liberal Publication Department?

*Mr. J. A. PEASE said the Government were probably not responsible for those. The fund was not necessarily limited to £100,000; that amount would be augmented by the Treasury from time to time, so that the statutory purposes of the fund might be fulfilled. If more than £100,000 was required in the course of a year it would be supplied when wanted. He would like to add that if there had been any mis-statement by the Member for the Rugby Division he could only say it was quite excusable, for even an eminent K.C., like other hon. Members, could not always follow the complicated system of Treasury finance. The Government were undoubtedly grateful to the hon. Member for Rugby for the efforts he had made in the country to explain this Act. In reply to the hon. Member for Ashford who had expressed dissatisfaction with the replies given on the preceding night on the question of gooseberry mildew, he would like to explain that the growers protested against the drastic steps first taken by the Board, and as it was obvious that the Board must secure the co-operation of the growers if they wished to eliminate the disease from the country the regulations were modified, otherwise the regulations might not be observed, and the very end which they had in view would be defeated. The Board were satisfied that the steps now being taken were sufficient. If they did not prove so, of course, more drastic steps would be taken. As to the request for more details of the scheduled areas and for more publicity, if it could be shown that it would be of any advantage to publish fuller details where outbreaks occurred that would be done. But the Board desired to go step by step and to take whatever course experience proved to be best. If, unfortunately, the disease broke out in the county of Kent, communication would be at once entered into with the local authorities, and in an hour or two possibly the order might be extended to Kent. Under the provisions of the Act the local authorities without the consent of the Department might pay compensation if they desired to do so.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY: And will they be allowed to vary the order and put in special provisions for Kent?

*Mr. J. A. PEASE: I think that would require a separate order.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY: Would the Board grant one?

*Mr. J. A. PEASE said the Board desired to work with the local authorities, but while many of them had been active in the matter, others apparently had not realised the importance of the powers conferred on them by the Act. With regard to milk-blended butter, he was advised that the intentions of Parliament had been strictly adhered to. The article generally termed milk-blended butter must bear a complete description of its contents, quite apart from its name, which, of course, could not include the word butter. The description not only included the percentage of water contained, but also the number of ounces. He was confident that the suspicion was unfounded that in this matter they had gone outside the intentions or words of the Act.

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg) said the hon. Gentleman had expressed the hope that during the time the small holder was not in occupation of the small holding the county council would farm small holdings themselves. He wished to inquire how he proposed they should do that, and how it was proposed to get the money. Would the county council be supposed to appoint a bailiff, and were they to have a farm committee to look after these matters? If the county council had to farm land when the smallholder was not in occupation, he wanted to know how they were going to do it, and out of what money the expenses were to be defrayed. The hon. Gentleman had said that very likely the county council would be able to repay themselves the money out of the proceeds from the harvest which they would reap later in the year. But supposing the harvest was a bad one, and resulted in a loss—and the hon. Gentleman knew as well as he did that farming was not always a profitable occupation—who was to pay for the loss? Would it be the ratepayers, or would the money be provided out of the £100,000 for the working of the Act? A point was raised the previous night as to a farm he proposed to let. There were on it three sets of buildings, including a house and stabling for eight horses. The county council proposed to place two families in the farmhouse already standing—and he might leave it to the hon. Gentleman to imagine how they would get on together—and to arrange for another outbuilding to be converted into a dwelling for a third smallholder, while they were going to create a fourth in a field adjoining. The county council would have to put up fencings, and drain the land which they were dividing. The fields might be laid down either with wheat, turnips, or potatoes, and he wished to know who was to suffer the loss if the crop proved a failure. If the hon. Gentleman could inform him on this point he would be very much obliged, because he believed such information would help the county council a good deal in their management of the question. He did not raise this point simply with the desire to make political capital out of it. They had to find the means whereby they could make the scheme a success, and he asked the question solely with the idea of trying to make the Act a perfect success.

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said he wished to refer to the possible loss during the year of equipment which might fall upon the ratepayers of the county. Before a successor was found he understood the county council would have to farm the place at the cost of the ratepayers. That, in any case, would be a speculative operation. Then there was the case in which the county council had taken the land on a fourteen years lease, and after the first two or three years the small holder abandoned it, and the farm again came into the hands of the council, who presumably, would not desire to let it run to waste and would have to farm it again. If all those risks would be put upon the ratepayers it seemed to him quite possible that the demand upon the rates might very easily exceed the amount which the Act allowed to be raised from the rates for the whole of its working. If that was so it was evident that the whole operation of the Act would come to an absolute deadlock. He believed that the largest amount which could be raised under the Act in Oxfordshire would be £5,000, and supposing the number of small holdings was anything like the demand anticipated, it seemed to him quite possible that the call upon the rates would exceed the £5,000 limit and under those circumstances the Act was bound to come to an absolute deadlock.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): This is not, in one sense, a very convenient time to deal with some of these Estimates, because, being the Report stage, the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote has not the same freedom that he would have on the Committee stage. Nevertheless I am sure the House will be only too glad to give him permission to deal with the questions which are of the most fundamental importance in connection with this Act. I am only going to raise an instance which was brought up last night of which the Department must be fully seized, and of which I have no doubt they have adequate information dealing with the very general points of policy with which I mean to trouble the House on the present occasion. The actual question before us is the £100,000 voted in the course of the present financial year, and the question is to what purpose that is or ought to be devoted, and how it should be expended in furthering the objects of the Act. My hon. friend behind me has already quoted a leaflet which has reached its second edition, written by the hon. Member for the Rugby division, in which the following words occur in respect of this very £100,000 with which the House is at present engaged—

> "The great difficulty in providing small holdings will be the cost of setting out the land, dividing it, fencing it, and supplying it with buildings and the like, and these expenses, unless some money help is given, will stop many a promising proposal."

This help is given in paragraph 2, referring to the £100,000 and the successors of that £100,000 which no doubt the Government will ask the House to vote next year and in subsequent years. That being the promise which has been made, and for which the Party opposite are responsible as a Party, because the leaflet is published by the Liberal Publication Department in connection with the National Liberal Federation—the Party opposite so far are collectively, if not severally and individually, responsible for this impression which is widespread throughout the country. The right. hon. Gentleman opposite now gets up and tells us that not a single penny of this £100,000 is going to be devoted to the purposes mentioned in this pamphlet. That means to say that not a penny of it is going towards the cost of setting out the land or towards dividing or fencing the land or supplying buildings and the like. It follows that the hon. Member who is responsible for this pamphlet and the society who have issued it have made their statements without a shadow of foundation. These proposals, which they say are going to be supported and subvented out of public funds, are not to have a single sixpence out of public funds to provide the initial cost of starting small holdings. In the face of these circumstances, my hon. friend behind me raised this very important question in a concrete instance which has come under his own personal experience. He offered, as the House knows, a farm to the county council at a less rent than the rent actually paid before, and less than he could probably get in the open market from a farmer prepared to farm the whole farm as an agricultural unit. His offer has been refused by the county council, and it has been refused because the county council say, and say with obvious truth, that there will be a heavy expense thrown upon them during that period in which they would not be able to put small holders on the land because the land is not ready to support them, and they obviously cannot have a tenant whilst the land is in the process of conversion from a big farm into smaller farms. They say that that is a costly process and they are not prepared to undergo it. Then my hon. friend, having failed with the county council, went to the Department and said: "Are you prepared to undertake this offer? Here is a farm offered to you below its commercial value, suitable for small holdings and for which small holders are ready." There are many parts of the country in which they are not ready, but in this case by common admission the small holders are ready. It would, therefore, seem to be the most favourable example you can possibly conceive for carrying out the objects aimed at by the Act which was conducted through the House by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and with whose objects everybody sympathises. If this is not an opportunity for turning a large farm into small farms, when are you going to have an opportunity? Both the county council and the Department say there are obstacles in the way; and yet the objection in this case is not that the landlord is asking an exorbitant price for his land, but that the carrying out of the scheme would be too expensive. Here the landlord offers the land at less than its value. Do you expect very much land to be offered you below its value? If you cannot deal with a situation in which the land is offered you below its value, how are you going to deal with it when the land is offered at its proper value? What peculiarity is there in connection with the farm offered by my hon. friend which is not incidental to every offer that is likely to be made, or, indeed, that you can conceive being made in a county or district where the farms are which you desire to make smaller? In every such case there will be this interval between the moment at which the large tenant leaves his holding either by death or resignation and the moment when the small holders can come into possession. There is no ground for thinking that the interval is likely to be longer or more costly to the county council or the

Government in this particular case than in all other cases. If, then, the interval is an adequate and reasonable one in the case of the farm offered by my hon. friend, how are we ever, under this Act, to see small holdings created in any part of the country? The right hon. Gentleman will thoroughly understand it. I do not urge this as an objection to the scheme for starting small holdings, but I do venture to point out that there must be some defect either in the machinery started by the Act of last year or in the manner in which that Act is being administered, which has interposed this obstacle between my hon. friend's intentions and the actual creation of small holdings. That obstacle is quite a simple one, and it is the very obstacle which the hon. Member for the Rugby division refers to in the pamphlet issued by the Publication Department of his Party, viz., the difficulty as to the cost of setting out the land, fencing it, supplying buildings and the like. You ought not to throw upon either the county council or the future small holder such costs as these. Why should you throw the cost on the county council? Why should the ratepayer of a particular county have their rates augmented and a new burden put upon them because the Government desire, for broad social reasons, to modify the existing system of occupation of land? Why should they bear the charge? I do not think any human being can find a reason. Why should the future holder bear the charge? The whole principle of the Act was that the county council should not lose any money by the creation of small holdings. If the county council are to lose no money, and if the State is not going to come to their assistance, and if the transforming of big farms is a costly proceeding, the only person who remains on whose shoulders that burden can be thrown is the small holder. If the taxpayer and county council ought not to be asked to do it, the only person that remains is the small holder. The money has to be found somewhere. I am afraid that in view of these facts you are going to start small holdings under conditions predoomed to failure. The difficulties of small holdings are very great, even when they are favourably situated in regard to markets, and the nature of the soil is specially fitted for intensive cultivation. If you are going to throw upon the small holder burdens which have nothing to do with the equipment—because the cost of putting up cottages or the necessary fences and the other things referred to are not equipment but the waste incidental to the period of transition—then you are placing upon him a very heavy burden indeed. For that the small holder is to get nothing at all, and he ought not to be charged for it. I do not see how your system is to go on if that is to be done. It is plain that if you do not charge it to the small holder you must charge it to the ratepayer or the taxpayer, and it is manifestly unjust to charge it to every ratepayer, because it does not benefit the ratepayer as such, for it is only part of a general scheme of social regeneration. The conclusion is irresistible that the person who ought to bear the loss of this period of transition must be the taxpayer; and what I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman is whether the Government or the Department have faced the necessity—whether they are prepared to say that this £100,000, and the other Votes of the same character, will not be used merely to deal with the preliminary expenses—with valuation, and matters of that kind—but in order to throw upon those who really ought to bear it, the charge inevitable to the transition from large culture to small culture. That is a perfectly plain question and it is strictly revelant to this Vote. It touches the very centre, essence, and core of the whole policy of the Government. The justification for what I have said is to be found in the pamphlet issued by the Liberal Party of which I am speaking, and the whole thing is brought to a focus, emphasised, and made plain and lucid to the idlest intelligence by the concrete case brought forward by my hon. friend, in which he shows that even where land suitable for small holdings is offered to the county council, and where small holders are ready to occupy the land, yet in the opinion of the Government Department the county council is justified in refusing the land, and the Department is justified in not carrying a scheme over the heads of the county council by accepting this relatively cheap land for the purposes for which the Act of last year was passed. I have not entered into irrelevant details. I have tried to focus the attention of the House on the crucial point, and I earnestly trust the Government will give a clear answer to what I am vain enough to think is a perfectly clear question.

*Mr. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said it was extremely unfortunate that the hon. Member for South-west Norfolk was not in the House at the present time. The hon. Member had probably had more experience in dealing with small holdings than any other Member in the House, being chairman of a small holdings association which had dealt with many cases precisely like that put before the House. Speaking in Committee yesterday he had stated that he had had to do with several cases such as that just described, and in every case had been able to make a profit during the year in which the farm was being prepared for the small holders. He himself imagined that the only reason why the county council did not accept the offer of the particular farm referred to was that their arrangements were not in a sufficiently advanced state for them to know who were suitable men to put on to the holdings, and the methods that ought to be adopted.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am told that that is not the case. I am told that there were small holders ready and that the county council knew they were ready.

Mr. EVERETT thought the county council were wanting in pluck when they did not accept the farm offered on a thirty-five years lease at an exceedingly low rate. He regretted the farm was not accepted forthwith and made the best of in the year during which it was being prepared for those who were to become the future permanent tenants.

*Mr. HARCOURT: I do not know how much longer the House will tolerate my disorderly intervention in the debate. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that it is an inconvenient moment to have what is really a complicated Committee discussion on the administration of the elaborate details of a particular Act. I assure the hon. Member for Windsor that in no circumstances can the cost of equipment of small holdings fall upon the ratepayer. That is paid by the county council and is charged to the tenants subsequently in the form of rent, spread over whatever term of years may be agreed upon on the settlement of the question of loans with the Local Government Board. With regard to a vacant small holding, I remind the House that the county council may let surplus land to others than small holders. When dealt with as surplus land it escapes the limitations imposed by the Bill generally.

Mr. J. F. MASON: The land may fail to be let altogether and remain in the hands of the county council.

*Mr. HARCOURT: Of course there are imaginary cases which could be produced in every discussion; but it is not in accordance with the general experience in England that much land should be left unoccupied. I am not as great an agricultural expert as the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, though, of course I have learned something from him, and I am aware, as he was good enough to inform the House, that crops do not grow up in an hour. The experience of small holdings associations does not confirm the fears of the hon. Baronet that there will be difficulty in getting a crop harvested by a neighbouring farmer or letting land temporarily to the neighbouring farmer himself, who will be very happy to attend to it. With reference to the questions of the Leader of the Opposition, what the hon. Baronet the Member for Brigg has done is to bring before the House special difficulties arising about a particular farm in his own possession. The county council seem to have had a most reasonable offer from the hon. Baronet, but they appear not to have been prepared with their whole scheme or ready at once to let off that farm to smallholders and wished to take it at a later date. I think they would have been well advised to have accepted what seems to have been a generous offer. I would have done so myself in their place without much anticipation of loss in the future. It is not the case that under the Act the Commissioners could come in and take the land. The Commissioners can only come in when the county council is in default or if in a district they wish to set up experimental small holdings to prove their feasibility. In this case there is a demand, the county council are ready to meet the demand, and they cannot be held to be in default, and it is not necessary to prove the feasibility of small holdings, as that is admitted.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD said the Commissioners had informed him that if they had accepted the offer he made to them, the same difficulties would have occurred to them as to the county council.

*MR. HARCOURT: Perhaps the difficulty arose because the special class of tenants had to be brought from a distance to occupy that particular farm. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that the cost of adaptation might be thrown upon the ratepayers under the Act.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not deal with the case of adaptation, but with the cost incidental to the fact that there must be an interval between the end of the tenure of the large holder and the beginning of the tenure of the small holder. Who is to bear that cost?

*MR. HARCOURT: In another well-known case, that of the Burwell small holdings, there was no interval at all, so that it is not the case that there must necessarily be an interval; but where there is an interval, undoubtedly the cost entailed is cost entailed in the adaptation of the land, and it will be charged to the loan for adaptation and equipment, and will therefore be spread over a series of years. What the right hon. Gentleman described as the waste incident to the period of transition is so extremely small when spread over a long period as to be practically a negligible quantity, and it has been proved to be so in the experience of those who have set up small holdings. There is another point I am bound to refer to. It is a point which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and that was the question as to whether his interpretation of the leaflet issued by the Liberal Publication Department was a correct one. If the right hon. Gentleman's literal interpretation of that leaflet is a correct one, then undoubtedly the leaflet is incorrect, and I will take care that it is corrected to that extent. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman and his friends that in any debates that took place last year in Committee upstairs or downstairs on Report, I never suggested for a moment that any part of the grant of £100,000 was to be applied to the equipment of the land or for the erection of buildings. I made it abundantly clear in debate in Committee and on the Report stage that that money was to be applied to various expenses incident to the acquisition of the land, and to losses which might be entailed while the Act was being reasonably carried out by a county council; and also that the grant might be used in giving assistance to co-operative and other associations. I never suggested for one moment that grants from the £100,000 were to be made for anything else.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I did not sit on the Committee upstairs, but my friends who did entirely bear out the recollection as to the statement of the purposes for which the grant of £100,000 was voted. But that fact only makes it less excusable that it should have been stated that it was to be devoted to the purposes indicated in the leaflet published by the Liberal Publication Department and circulated broadcast over the land in connection with the agitation which the Government supporters are carrying on to stimulate the demand for small holdings. The statement has been repudiated by the right hon. Gentleman. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman will have it corrected, and I hope that he will exercise a similar much-to-be-desired censorship on the other publications of the Liberal Publication Department.

MR. HARCOURT: I am very busy.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: If the right hon. Gentleman were to correct all the publications of the Liberal Publication Department so that they should square exactly with the truth it would require a great deal of his time. One word as to the real difficulty that has arisen, and which the right hon. Gentleman passes by much too lightly. No doubt there will be difficulties in carrying out the Act, and one of these has been illustrated by the case mentioned by my hon. friend the Member for Brigg. Doubtless there will be cases where the new tenant can at once occupy the land or where arrangements can be made for the cultivation of the land in the interval. But in the great majority of cases in order to turn the big farm into small holdings considerable work will have to be done which must involve a disturbance of occupation, must destroy crops which may be on the ground, or prevent the ground being worked. The right hon. Gentleman refuses--and I do not charge him with any breach of faith—to give any portion of the grant of £100,000 to pay for the loss incurred. If he maintains that refusal, what will be the result ? The rent for the land which cannot be used will have to be added to the expense of equipping the land to be acquired by the new tenant when he gets into the holding. What we are asking the new tenant to do is not only to pay for the full use of the land during the time he occupies it, but in addition to exact from him rent for the land before he gets occupation of his holding. I ask the Government: Do they think they will really promote the establishment of small holdings if they refuse to allow a grant out of the £100,000 to meet cases of that kind ?

Mr. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) said that, as a Member sitting on the back benches, he wished to protest strongly against the fact that not a single member of the Government was prepared to answer the question brought forward by the hon. Member for Brigg. It was a most important question, and if no answer was to be given to it it seemed to him that the Act of last year, on which the Government prided themselves, would prove absolutely unworkable in practice. The question briefly was this: What was to be done with the land while it was being prepared for the new small holder ? The right hon. Gentleman had replied by saying that the county council would crop the land. The hon. Baronet had asked a simple question, but the right hon. Gentleman had not given an answer to it. How could the county council find the money to carry on the cultivation of the land ? The reason why no member of the Government was prepared to answer the question of the hon. Member for Brigg was absolutely simple. It was that the Government chose last session to place the right hon. Gentleman in charge of an important Bill dealing with agriculture when he had nothing to do with that Department himself. And the right hon. Gentleman was sent down that day and on the previous day to reply to questions as to the administration of the Act now that it had become law. The right hon. Gentleman had got up at the Table on several occasions and declared that he knew nothing of his own Act. Such a state of affairs as now existed was an absurdity. The right hon. Gentleman had had a night's rest, and when he could not answer the questions asked on the previous day he might have taken the trouble to find out whether there was any possible answer to them. The answer which the right hon. Gentleman had given that day to the question put to him by the hon. Member for Brigg had, he thought, been of a most unsatisfactory character. The whole financial methods of dealing with the Act seemed to him to be absurd and impossible. In the Estimates of the present year there was no mention of the £100,000 and no Vote for another £100,000; nor was there the slightest mention to the House that £100,000 had been voted last year. He asked the right hon. Gentleman what was the attitude of the Government in regard to this particular matter ? Did they intend to continue the grant of £100,000 during the coming year ? And would it be done by way of a Supplementary Estimate, or how would it be done ?

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) said he thought from what had fallen from the hon. Member that it must be obvious that the Government would have been better advised if they had not taken this particular Estimate to-day, but had waited until the representative of the Department of Agriculture could have attended. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman who was now filling his position repudiated the leaflet circulated by the Liberal Publication Department and that instructions would be given that the pamphlet should no longer be circulated in order to delude the people on this important subject. He wished the right hon. Gentleman had answered the question pressed upon him from more than one quarter of the House. They were very anxious to discover some of the details for which this large sum of money was to be voted. It was shrouded in mystery except that the £100,000 was to assist in providing the machinery whereby the Small Holdings Act was to be carried on. It was in no sense to pay for building materials or the like. His recollection of the Act was that some of the £100,000 might be called upon to make good the losses which would arise under the scheme. The question he would press on the right hon. Gentleman was: In the event of the £100,000 being found in practice to be wasted on law charges and inspectors' fees instead of in actually providing small holdings, could he give the House any estimate whatever of the number of small holdings that would be carried on with the money? They knew that £100,000 was to assist in the project of providing small holdings, but they had no chance whatever of estimating what benefit it would be to the small holders in the long run. Was it not possible that a large part of the money might be frittered away in compelling the local authorities to put the Act into operation? The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the case mentioned by the hon. Member for Brigg had been tricked out in order to emphasise an argument, but he thought it was far better to take a concrete instance than to deal in generalities, and they all knew that the hon. Member for Brigg was in favour of a scheme of small holdings rather than against it. With no desire in the world to prevent small holdings being started where they were economically sound and where they did not undersell those who were engaged in a similar occupation, he thought the Government were making a very meagre effort to carry out their great flag-waving performance at the general election. They seemed to think that they could pass a Bill through the House of Commons and vote £100,000 for an indefinite period. The Junior Lord of the Treasury, in referring to the pamphlet issued by the Liberal Publication Department, said that, although it was wrong, yet if the £100,000 was insufficient to carry out the Act more money would be found. That was going further than the statement in the pamphlet to which so much objection had been taken; and surely the House should have some estimate as to what amount of money was wanted. It appeared to him that to rush this Estimate through the House on the understanding that if it proved insufficient the Government were prepared to ask for an unlimited supply, was not a fair course to pursue. Nothing could be more vague than for a Government to say that if the Estimate of £100,000 they put forward was not enough they would present another for a further £100,000 or £200,000. He would like to know whether this sum of £100,000 was also to include a certain amount of expenses for instructors. The right hon. Gentleman had suggested that a man might be brought from one part of England to another in order to be supplied with a farm in a different part of the country from that to which he was naturally adapted. They all knew that farms, whether on a large or on a small scale, differed throughout England, not to mention Ireland and Scotland, and he wished to ascertain whether it was intended that Irish farmers who had been unsuccessful in obtaining allotments in congested districts would be brought across to Essex or Kent and have a farm provided for them under the Act.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Member is now discussing the general provisions of the Act, but that does not come under the review of the House at the present time, but only the question as to the allocation of this £100,000.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he was just going to ask whether, in such a case as he had put, this £100,000 would be used to instruct any farmer coming to a fresh place, because it appeared to him that if a part of this money was spent in giving instruction to those who were granted farms under the Small Holdings Act, everyone would agree that it should be given. He did not think that money for a Small Holdings Act could be better spent than in giving those who were to occupy the farms a thorough technical training in that industry on which their livelihood depended. If that was what the £100,000 meant he would like to see part of it devoted to that purpose. He would also urge upon the Government the necessity of keeping a close analysis of how the money was spent after the new holdings had been created, because it would be an inestimable advantage if the right hon. Gentleman could produce evidence of the application of the sum which they were then voting. The right hon. Gentleman should keep a close record not alone of the actual salaries of the multifarious officials employed, but of the effect of having transformed some of the larger farms into smaller ones. He did not think that anyone who took an interest in agriculture, whether in Ireland or in England, could have more valuable data to go upon than that which might be the result of voting this large sum of money for this purpose. Another point to which he would like to refer was one which the right hon. Gentleman pooh-poohed as a merely imaginary idea, viz., that some of the farms taken over by the local authority, might be left derelict. If the right hon. Gentleman would only cast his eyes across the water to Ireland he would know that local authorities did have trouble in letting land which they had acquired under a scheme such as was framed under the Act. The right hon. Gentleman had said they were merely supposing a case, but they knew of concrete cases, and the right hon. Gentleman was really in the air, as he was apt to be in this matter, instead of studying practical details. It was extremely difficult for local authorities after having acquired land and equipped it to find a tenant who was willing to step in. The right hon. Gentleman had still left unanswered the question of who was to bear the loss in such a case, whether it would come from this £100,000 or be paid eventually by the ratepayers of the district. Surely it was not too much to ask for an answer to the question put by the Leader of the Opposition and that it should not be dismissed in the airy fashion in which it had been.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) entirely agreed with his hon. and gallant friend that the Government would have been well advised in postponing this Vote until the Minister actually responsible was in the House. With the peculiar charm which the House unanimously admitted the First Commissioner of Works to possess, he had nearly persuaded the House to rush through the Vote of £100,000 without any discussion at all. They were deeply indebted, as they often were, to the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London for having dragged out of the Government what the Vote really meant, although even now there was a somewhat confused impression of what it meant. This was not an annual Vote, but a lump sum of £100,000. The Junior Lord of the Treasury had pointed out that, although it need not all be spent at once, far more might be spent than £100,000. They were not told how much more was likely to be spent. It might be extended into many hundreds of thousands before the Government were satisfied. There was one refreshing incident in the speech of the Junior Lord, and that was the frank and complete repudiation of the abominable pamphlets published by the hon. Gentleman's Party. He thought it gave great satisfaction to every Member that he, standing at the Front Bench, should repudiate entirely leaflets circulated by the Liberal Party throughout the country, which leaflets they knew had been so completely misleading in the past. He could not help thinking, after listening to the discussion, that after the very able and weighty speech made by the Leader of the Opposition, and after the many speeches which had followed, they were entitled to some fuller answer as to what the distribution of the £100,000 would be, and whether the Junior Lord of the Treasury was correct in saying that the £100,000 did not mean the limit, but that it could be almost indefinitely extended. This mode of silently voting money without any discussion should come to an end. The party of economy really seemed to be a party of extravagance, and the pledges of economy made so freely at the election seemed to be departed from when any Vote came before the House. The only Party that appeared to take any interest in these matters was the Unionist Party. He looked at the Nationalist Benches. There was only one Member there. He looked at the Labour Benches. There were only three Members present. And yet they had been discussing the voting of millions of money.

*Captain CLIVE (Herefordshire, Ross) thought that the country had looked upon this £100,000 as being practically promised for the purposes of the Small Holdings Act, because those interested in small holdings had certainly been led to expect that that amount and more would be forthcoming from the Treasury to start the Act. If he understood what had happened it appeared to be stated from the Government Benches that day that none of this money was going to be applied in the current year to carrying out the Small Holdings Act. The farmers in the country regarded the Act with some suspicion, because rightly or wrongly they feared that some of the best parts of their farms might be taken away, and from another point of view they felt that there would be an increased charge on the rates. He could not help thinking that they would suspect that the Government, who had opposed the Agricultural Rating Act but dared not repeat it, were trying to throw the burden of the Small Holdings Act, for which they claimed so much credit, on the ratepayers. It seemed to him that at least part of this £100,000 might have been used for such a case as that brought before the House by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Brigg Division, because it appeared that under the Act the Treasury might assist county councils where, through no fault of the county councils, there had been a loss in any particular year He thought the Treasury might have been more generous in assisting the county councils in these matters. It certainly would be extremely hard upon the small holder to have to pay not only the interest on the buildings, but also towards the loss which would occur during the first year. He still hoped that some encouragement would be given to the small holders with regard to these matters.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York) said the Unionist members of the Small Holdings Committee which discussed this matter for many days upstairs, last year, always foretold that the time of disillusionment would come to the small holders. The right hon. Member for Bordesley over and over again impressed on the Committee the fact that when the matter was completely understood it would be found that the beast of burden would be the small holder. He, therefore, was not surprised if disappointment had already arisen in the minds of intending small holders all over the country when they found that this £100,000 was not available for the purpose of providing a great portion of the initial expenditure. They had only just awakened to the fact that they not only would have to pay the rent but also a sum which in eighty years would represent the capital value of the land, and it was a great blow to them to find that at the end of that time the county councils became the owners of the land instead of themselves.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to discuss the policy of the Act as a whole. He is only entitled to discuss the allocation of the £100,000.

*MR. GEORGE FABER apologised for travelling rather wide of the question. He believed, however, that the small holder had got it into his head that this sum of £100,000 was going to provide for the indirect expenses, and that all he would have to pay would be the rent. But during the suspension period, the intermediate period between the time the land was taken from the landlord and the time when it was handed over to the small holder, during which a loss was likely to occur, such loss would directly or indirectly fall upon the small holder. He had not been present during the whole of the debate, but he understood that the right hon. Gentleman had not given any encouraging reply on this point. As he understood, the right hon. Gentleman stated that the £100,000 would not be available to recoup anybody for the loss that might occur during the intermediate period, and that certainly would be a great disappointment to the small holder. Last year the House understood that there would have to be a large sum provided for the cost of equipment, and he did not for one moment imagine that this £100,000 was going to be the beginning and the end of it. Many hundreds of thousands of pounds would have to follow the £100,000 which was now being voted. The House would be entering a fool's paradise if it imagined that this was anything more than the beginning of a great expenditure. This

Act, if it was to bring success, was going to cost the country a very large sum. The experiment might not be worth it, though he thought it would be if a large number of small holders could be put upon the land, but there could be no doubt that it must mean a great expenditure of public money.

*Mr. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said that both the right hon. Gentleman opposite and the hon. Member for Suffolk seemed disposed to take the Lindsey county council to task, because they did not at once close with the offer of the hon. Member for the Brigg Division, but he desired to support the county council of the county to which he belonged. He ventured to say that that body was wiser than the right hon. Gentleman in not accepting the offer of his hon. friend. The right hon. Gentleman said that this was a special difficulty, arising in a special case, but the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition was quite correct when he pointed out that this was not a special difficulty in a special case at all, but these were difficulties which would necessarily arise in every case, no matter when they arose, and which would always have to be met. The right hon. Gentleman was quite correct in what he had stated as to the course he had always taken with regard to the £100,000. He remembered more, though he had forgotten it when this debate began, that this very question was raised in Grand Committee upon an Amendment which he himself moved. He did not remember exactly what the Amendment was, but he proposed to alter the wording of the clause so as to make the £100,000 available for this particular purpose. The ground upon which he moved the Amendment was that unless that were done, he felt perfectly satisfied that the Bill could never be made a workable Act or a success. The right hon. Gentleman however took the opposite view. His right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition was quite right when he pointed out that all this must be an additional burden on the new tenant, the small holder. How would it work out in the case put before the House in the course of the debate? The hon. Member for the Brigg Division this afternoon had given a concrete case, in which he showed that a sum of £1,200 and probably more would have to be spent on the buildings and equipment and the necessary conversion of this one farm into several small farms. That alone would result with some other expenses that he pointed out in an addition of 9s. to 9s. 6d. an acre to the rent. But that was not all that would have to be provided, because the new tenant would be charged rent during the period of conversion which would be a dead loss. In this case the rent was to be 20s. That would come to £200 a year. But that was not all because the tenant right had to be provided for, and that also fell upon the small holder. It would not be a very extravagant estimate to put the value of the tenant right at two years rent which made another £400 a year. So that altogether £650 a year more had to be provided which would work out at 5s. or 6s. an acre more. Here they had at the commencement small holdings on a particular farm paying an additional rent of between 15s. and 16s., and he thought that under these circumstances the county council had acted very wisely. But this would not be a special case; it was what they would have to look forward to in every case. They would always be confronted with these difficulties. That was the reason why in Committee upstairs he had expressed his view as strongly as he could upon this point, showing that if they were determined to make this experiment in the form of compulsory hire, the burden ought to fall on the State. To that opinion he still adhered. And he thought that here they had an object lesson in the case brought forward, which ought to lead them to see that he was not very far wrong in the observations he had made in Committee.

*Mr. HARCOURT: I do not rise to further intervene in the debate. I have been asked several questions with regard to the allocation of the sum of £100,000. Those who have taken part in the debate know very well the purposes to which it is to be devoted. I have risen because references have been made to a leaflet containing statements with reference to the allocation of the amount, and I should state at once that a blunder in the leaflet was discovered long ago, and the leaflet was withdrawn long ago. I have in my hand the leaflet which has now been issued by the Liberal Publication Department for some time. It contains no statement with regard to the allocation of that £100,000 which is not absolutely correct, and I now offer the right hon. Gentleman the last revise.

Resolution agreed to.

Third Resolution—(£20 (Supplementary), The Mint, including Coinage)—considered.

SIR F. BANBURY said the original estimate was £12,000, and now it was £14,307, which was an extremely large increase of about 20 per cent. The explanation of it was that it was to defray the additional expenses for freight in respect of the large quantities of silver required for shipment abroad. He thought they must be indeed unusually large quantities if there was such a great increase in the amount charged for freight. He would like to ask first of all how such a bad estimate had come to be made of the quantity of silver required for shipment abroad. He spoke rather in ignorance, and would like to be corrected; but he presumed that the quantity of silver required for shipment abroad was well known, that it did not vary very much, and that consequently the Mint should have been able to ascertain with a greater degree of precision the amount required for the landing of silver abroad. He would also like to know why such unusually large quantities of silver coin were required for shipment abroad. He assumed that it was not preliminary to bimetallism.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I do not know whether I am right in supposing, though I think it is very likely, that a good deal of this silver coinage is required for West Africa, where for the most part the silver currency, as far as it existed, consisted of the Maria Theresa dollar, which was the customary medium of exchange. Since the development of the British Empire in West Africa, and possibly in East Africa as well, though of that I know nothing, the English silver coinage has been used, and I think I am right in saying that it has already got considerable circulation. At the time of the death of her late Majesty the matter was seriously considered by the Colonial Office whether they could afford to change the head upon the coinage at the time when the new coins were struck, and whether the head of his present Majesty on the coins for use in Great Britain could be put on the silver coinage for use in West Africa. It was feared that the change might give rise in those regions to the idea that the new money was bad money, which would not meet with acceptance. I am glad to know, however, that those fears were overruled, and I believe that the coinage with the King's head on it is finding ever increasing currency in Africa. That being so, I wanted to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury if he can tell me what arrangement is prevailing as to the profits on the silver coinage. I think I am right in saying that some arrangement for procuring an account of the coinage has been made with certain Colonies, but I am not quite certain to what extent they do account for silver coinage in the great self-governing Colonies at the present time. I believe, however, there were certain arrangements by which they were to share the profits of such silver coinage as was absorbed by them. What I want to ask the hon. Gentleman is whether any similar arrangement is in force with regard to those African Possessions of ours—whether they are allowed to enjoy, as part of their revenue, the profits on the silver coinage sent to them, or whether it is all retained by the Treasury.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): The right hon. Gentleman is probably aware that most of our West African Colonies, and I think the whole of the East African Colonies, are not self-supporting, and the view of the Treasury is that it would be ridiculous to say that we should share the profits with those Colonies to which we are already making grants in aid. It was agreed at the last Colonial Conference that we should allow the whole of the profits on the silver coinage to go to the revenue of the Australian Colonies. Last year we coined something like

£23,000,000. We could not possibly make a very near estimate. Indeed, in making up our Estimates we were bound to be guided by the Bank, and the Bank, like everybody else, were completely out in their estimates of the amount of money required last year. Very much more silver and copper coinage was required for circulation last year than we ever needed before. The hon. Gentleman knows that there was a movement all over the world, which no one could foresee. I need not go into further detail, but would merely ask the House to agree to the Resolution.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution—Class III., £1,870, Public Trustee—considered.

SIR F. BANBURY said the details were apparently very small as to what had been spent. Travelling and incidental expenses, £200; salaries, £2,070; and appropriation-in-aid, £400. He presumed the appropriation-in-aid was fees received by the Public Trustee for the services which he had performed for the public. Personally he was very much in favour of the appointment of a Public Trustee, and he was extremely glad the House had passed an Act which permitted of that appointment. He believed his hon. friend opposite did not regard the appointment in the same way as he did, but even great minds sometimes differed, and perhaps this was a case in point.. He was obliged to ask how it was that the fees were such a very small sum as £400. He presumed the explanation was that when the Supplementary Estimate was presented to the House the Act had only been working for a short time, and that consequently a fair trial had not yet been given to it. But he would like to know how the work was progressing, and whether they would require Supplementary Estimates of this sort again, or whether the amount of the fees would in future avoid the necessity for a Supplementary Estimate. As to the amount of the fees, he thought the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney-General would agree that it was not desirable that the fees charged should be such as to prevent people availing themselves of the services of the Public Trustee. There was an idea—he hoped it was a misconception—that in addition to the fee charged at the commencement for the Public Trustee to take over the trust, certain other fees were to be charged which might be unreasonable. He was inclined to think himself that that was an error, and that the charges would not be excessive. He did not know whether the hon. and learned Gentleman could tell him exactly what the charges were. He would like to know whether the fees were fixed by the Treasury, and whether there was any intention of making a profit, or whether the Treasury desired so to fix the fees as to cover expenses. He thought they should not impose such fees as to make a profit. The conception of the Act was that a service should be rendered to the public, and the service should be one for which the public were justly charged the ordinary expenses arising out of the rendering of the service, but no opportunity should be taken to enable the Department to make a profit. He was quite certain, being anxious for the success of the Department, that if the idea got about that there was a profit to be made out of it it would probably militate against its success.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields): The hon. Baronet has asked why the fees appearing on the Estimate as having been received by the Department are so small. I think he has himself suggested a sufficient reason. The Act only came into operation on 1st January, therefore there has not been time to receive anything but the initial fees. Of course, there are some fees, I apprehend, depending upon the duration of the administration of the estate, but I believe it is the desire of the Treasury, as it certainly was the desire of the promoters and framers of the Bill, not to make this a profit-bearing Department at all. On the contrary, I think the apprehension was that it might result in a loss, having regard to the provision that no estate was to be refused by reason of its smallness, so that naturally, although I believe some distinguished persons on both sides of the House have entrusted the Public Trustee with the management of trust affairs, yet naturally the trust estates first put under the Public Trustee are of a very small character and will bear very small fees. Therefore, the fees have been fixed as low as possible. Of course, there is a margin which will have to be acted upon if it is found that they are too high, but certainly the present intention is to keep them as low as possible. They are fixed by rule, and as little element of discretion as possible is left to those who have the administration. The rule can and will be varied according to experience. At present those who are better able to judge of the Department than I, who have no direct connection with it at all, have been busily engaged, and so far during the short time in which it has been at work it appears to have given satisfaction.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said there was one side of this subject that he wanted to mention. He had supported the appointment of the Public Trustee because he believed it would be a benefit to small testators, and he hoped the Attorney-General would use his influence to get some advertisement of the advantages of the Department exhibited in the Post Offices of the country. He had not seen any advertisement of the Act beyond a statement written by the Public Trustee and inserted in some of the newspapers, but a general standing advertisement in any of the Government offices he had not seen, and he thought the Trustee ought to do something in that direction.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted, and forty Members being found present,

MR. JOHN WARD, continuing, said he did not know whether notices of this description could be posted in Post Offices without the sanction of the Postmaster-General, but he should say that if the Trustee really wished to draw the attention of the public to the provisions of the Act, that would be a very good way and he should not think the Postmaster-General would raise any objection to that form of advertisement. He would like to know whether note would be taken of that and the Trustee's attention drawn to it.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York) said he wished to ask the Attorney-General one or two questions regarding the Public Trustee. Could he tell him how many offices, if any, were being established in the provinces under the Act? He quite understood that the Act only came into operation on 1st January, but perhaps some developments in the direction he had indicated had already been made. When the Bill was passing through that House he remembered offering the objection, among others, that there would be a great tendency to centralise the duties of the office and the money as well. Being a country banker he took objection to this, because under the old system where a man died in the country the estate was wound up there, and the country bank and the country-side retained the advantage of the circulation of the money; but under the office of a Public Trustee there would be a great tendency for the money to come to London and the country would correspondingly suffer. There was a provision in the Act that bankers and solicitors who had been employed by a testator in his life-time should still as far as possible be employed by the Public Trustee, instead of the dead man's business being taken out of their hands and brought to London. He hoped to be told that this was being done and that there was going to be no uprooting of business. If he had a satisfactory assurance on this point, a great deal of the feeling he had against the measure would be removed. He understood that the fees would in no way be prohibitive, because the good that was likely to accrue to small estates must be immensely affected by the proportion the fees would bear to the value of the whole estate. Poor men were not going to get the advantage which it was expected they would receive if the fees were anything like commensurate with the fees that would have been charged by the local solicitor under the old system. He quite agreed with the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London that the fees should as far as possible balance the expenses of the office, but no more. The whole object of the measure was that the public should feel secure in employing this public officer and that the fees should be as low as possible. It would be shocking to find that a public Department was making a profit out of the trust. He forgot how it worked out in regard to the Colonies where this system was in operation, but he seemed to remember that in regard to the Cape the fees were found to work out at a high standard, and had a tendency, as all these matters had, to rise. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to reassure them in regard to that also.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said it was manifest that it would be more difficult in this case than in most to settle the scale of fees, because in the past the business which had to be paid for under the Act had been done free of charge, so that if business was to be attracted to this Department, and if it was to become really a useful institution in the country, the scale of fees must certainly be very moderate, otherwise other trustees would be persuaded to act as they had in the past, and look after their affairs for nothing. If there was a very low scale of fees there might be large business, and he thought the largeness of the business that would accrue would counterbalance the lowness of the fees, so that although the scale of fees had been fixed, as some considered rather high, still if the business became a large one, as was hoped, it would be possible to reduce the fees. The Department would thus be popularised and a large number of trust estates would be got under the management of the Public Trustee. It looked as if it would be a matter which might not pay at first, and they would have to supplement it in some small way, because unless low charges were adopted at first they could not secure the business, and it was on a large business being secured that profits would depend. He believed that in several of the Colonies it had been possible to lower the fees, and to make them very moderate indeed, and even then to make a considerable profit; so that if the Treasury would come to the aid of the Department for a short time until it could get the business he really thought it would benefit in the end. If they charged very moderately at the first and so secured a large business—and of course the expenses of the Trust Department spread over this large business would be comparatively small—they would make the Department the useful one which they all hoped it might be.

Mr George Faber.

Sir W. ROBSON said that with regard to the establishment of branch offices, they had taken that power by the rules, and that was sufficiently indicative of the intent of the Department with regard to country business. Of course it would depend a good deal upon the prospects, and it would not be desirable to put up important offices at the cost of some hundreds a year, unless it was warranted by the prospects of business. In great provincial centres there ought not to be any difficulty in establishing branch offices. One of the most obvious advantages of the Act would be to localise business as far as it was possible consistently with economy and efficiency. With regard to what had been said by the hon. Member for Yarmouth, they were quite conscious of the importance of making the fees as low as possible, and it would be a great disappointment if the costs approximated to such a high amount as that which had been referred to. It was their intention to administer the trust estates as economically as possible.

Resolution agreed to.

Fifth Resolution—£327, Treasury Chest Bond—considered.

Sir F. BANBURY said that this was a very satisfactory Estimate, because, apparently this year the transmission of money abroad had only cost £327, whereas last year it was £14,600. That might arise from several causes. In the first place it might arise from the fact that the exchanges had gone in our favour. It might also arise from the fact that the official who was in charge of this Department had been extremely clever in his transmission of the money abroad, and had taken advantage of favourable exchanges. If so, he thought it was very creditable to the Treasury. Another cause might be that they had not transmitted anything like the same quantity as the previous year. In view of the fact that there had been such an extraordinary diminution he hoped the hon. Member opposite would be able to give them some further information. It was a rather important matter, because the question of exchanges was very technical, and if the Treasury had by their ability succeeded in effecting this great saving it was much to their credit.

MR. RUNCIMAN said the amounts sent abroad had been very much the same as in former years. The real cause of the diminution was that every effort had been made to avoid anything in the nature of speculation and the exchanges had been very largely in our favour. That was the explanation of the diminution.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [11TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Resolution reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

CLASS III.

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £2,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for Criminal Prosecutions and other Law Charges in Ireland."

Resolution read a second time.

CAPTAIN CRAIG moved to reduce the Vote by £100 in order to strive to elicit from the law officers of the Crown in Ireland, some explanation of how it was that, after the statement made by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in this House on taking up the reins of office that he found Ireland more peaceful than it had been for the past 600 years, he had found it necessary to come to the House of Commons and ask for an additional sum of £2,500 over the original Estimate for criminal prosecutions and other law charges in Ireland. Those who had lived in Ireland during the past year had often wondered why the law officers of the Crown took any action at all when it was done in the manner in which they did it. He had frequently had occasion to complain that measures might have been taken which would have largely prevented the Irish Department asking for a supplementary grant, but whilst those measures might have been taken early in the Chief Secretary's *regime* they were postponed from day to day and month to month, with the result that in the end troubles had arisen which at first were only slight and to which those sitting on the Opposition Benches had called the attention of the Chief Secretary *ad nauseam*, pointing out from day to day by Questions the dangerous path upon which he and the law officers of the Crown were treading. The law officers allowed turbulence and all classes of troubles which were preventible to go on increasing, with the result that they had been put to this extraordinary expense at the close of the past year. He and his friends looked with alarm on the course which events had taken, and no one in the House who had ever heard any of the hon. Members for Ulster speak on the situation would for a moment hesitate to say that the prognostications which they made earlier in the year had been not only fulfilled, but very greatly exceeded. There was an item on the Paper for £13,000 for prosecutions, etc., which included the expenses of witnesses, and so on, and fees to the law officers for contentious business. He would not be in order in raising the whole question of what the contentious business was, but he thought on the broad lines of the fact that they were asked to-day to put their sign and seal to a still further augmented grant to those who took over Ireland as they admitted in a more peaceful condition than it had been for the last 600 years, and they were entitled to a very lengthy and clear explanation as to what had given rise to this extraordinary charge. He did not desire to throw any aspersions on the law officers of the Crown, nor did he think that was the opportunity to do it. He thought, however, that they had signally failed in their duty through a mistaken idea and the mistaken policy which they had followed. Although during the latter end of their tenure they had begun to throw more and more of the blame for the state of chaos which had been arrived at on the

Chief Secretary, he thought that even then they might have shown what the law officers of the Crown in Ireland for generations had always been renowned for showing, viz., that they were prepared to accept the responsibility of their high office, irrespective altogether of who happened to be temporarily the Chief Secretary for Ireland. It had been mainly by subordinating themselves to the Chief Secretary for Ireland that the Attorney-General and the law officers of the Crown had found it necessary to ask for further grants. He and his friends had been blamed on more than one occasion for making it necessary for the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General to attend when it would not have been necessary but for the manner in which they had dealt with subjects on the Unionist Benches. They had continually repudiated that charge; they had always said that any action they took in this House was to assist the Chief Secretary and the law officers in maintaining law and order. What profit would it be to them to stir up trouble and turmoil among the poor peasants of the south and west of Ireland? He had always said that while the House was sitting those who lived in distant parts of Ireland were freer from tyranny and outrage than when the House was not sitting. He attributed that to the fact that they had weak-kneed administrators in Dublin Castle who would not prosecute when they ought to prosecute and who prosecuted after a lot of damage was done, and that it was only by Questions in the House they could protect the poor people who were tyrannised in the south and west and who had no other protection. They had had to take the law so far as that was concerned into their own hands, and he conscientiously believed they had done an immense amount of good even since this session began by calling attention to the outrages which had occurred and by showing evil doers that they had eagle eyes upon them in the House of Commons. In that way the police had been urged to a certain amount of activity where the law officers of the Crown had entirely failed. There would be no necessity for much of the hard work that fell to the Ulster representatives in Parliament if those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen would only do half their duty. They shirked their duty and did not do even a tenth of what they might do in the interests of the country. The effect of that was to show evil-doers that, so far as the law officers were concerned, they were able to shelter themselves behind the skirts of a timid Government in Dublin Castle. He would ask whether it was not a fact that members of the Government themselves by speeches made in Parliament and elsewhere had contributed very largely to those very cases for which this extra amount appeared on the Paper. The way in which the new terroism which had arisen in Ireland had been dealt with by the Irish Executive was, in his opinion, simply disgraceful. The only occasions on which the Chief Secretary had striven to warn the people of the South and West of Ireland were when he delivered speeches at Southampton and Belfast. These were the two centres where the Chief Secretary in a flippant manner drew attention to serious crime raging through large districts in the South and West of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that after all these particular disturbances and crimes could only be called the higgle of the market for land hunger. In the event of the Government remaining in power for a number of years—though that was not probable—was the country to be asked to pay year after year in this way? If the Government did not stiffen their backs and adopt some more strenuous methods of showing that they intended to maintain law in Ireland the House would be face to face with a growing sum of money on the Estimates each year. He asked for some assurance that the Government would prevent this, and that they would strive to turn over a new leaf to do justice as between man and man in Ireland, and to see that people who wished to live at peace and harmony with their neighbours were not terrorised. Now was the opportunity of the Government for making a pronouncement in the House that as far as lay in their power they would not come down again and ask for an additional £2,500 to pay for weakness and bungling on their part. Another point was that the law officers had chosen the most expensive way of conducting their cases. Men who ought to have been tried in Belfast had at considerable expense been taken to Dublin for trial. Why should the country at large be compelled to pay the extra expenses consequent on the Attorney-General changing the venue? Everybody knew that Belfast juries gave just and straightforward judgments in any case brought before them. That had been admitted not only by eminent lawyers, but by people of all classes and creeds in Ireland from time immemorial. The fact remained that in the case he had in his mind those who happened to differ from the Attorney-General were allowed to be tried in Belfast, while others charged in almost the same kind of cases were transferred to Dublin for trial. The right hon. Gentleman had lowered the dignity of his office by his action, and at the same time placed on the Estimates a portion of the £2,500 increase. He would not trouble the House with many cases which he could mention where money might have been saved but for the action of the law officers. The Attorney-General had seen fit to bring a large number of cattle-raiding cases to Dublin, but he would ask whether value was got for the money which had been spent. He did not refer to the sentences which might or might not have been passed, but to the effect on the country. After all, in these cases where poor ignorant people were made the dupes of those who were in the closest possible touch with Dublin Castle and its officials, he held that they were entitled to ask whether the proceedings that took place at great expense to the country as a whole left the impression on them that the majesty of the law had been upheld, and that the law officers had really and sincerely done their best to bring the accused persons to justice? The only impression left on the country after these expensive trials was one of disgust at the futility of the attempts of the right hon. Gentleman. It would take many years to restore the law to the dignity it enjoyed before the present staff took office in Dublin Castle. They approached matters in a light and airy way. They clung tenaciously to the coat-tails of the Nationalist Party in the vain hope that by currying favour with them they might be able to govern Ireland by other methods than the proper maintenance of law and order. And the Nationalist Party had failed as they always did when they entered into a bargain with the Government. He had charged the Government, and he repeated the charge now, with having made a bargain with hon. Members below the Gangway to the effect that if hon. Members would only assist them in their impossible task of attempting to govern Ireland in this way, later in the session they would be rewarded with legislation that should not only satisfy the land hunger, but also Irish aspirations in the direction of higher education. He hoped something might be said in the course of this debate by hon. or right hon. Gentlemen opposite which would clear the air of many of the charges made against the Government. But it was significant that only recently at Southampton the Chief Secretary had asked in a more or less despairing manner how he could be expected to do what he intended to do for the amelioration of the condition of the people of Ireland unless hon. Members backed him up in maintaining that law and order which he should have maintained without their assistance. He had placed this reduction on the Paper in the hope of drawing from the responsible Ministers for Ireland some explanation of their attitude during the past few months. He perceived that part of the charge was for the expenses of prosecutors and witnesses. What had been the reason for this increase in the expenses for witnesses? For all the good that had come out of the prosecutions he would have thought the witnesses would not have been worth £100, let alone £1,000. There was no justification for this sum of £1,000 for expenses of prosecutors and witnesses. If the trials had taken place in the places where the crimes had been committed all these expenses would have been saved. It was a farce to suppose that law and order could not be maintained in Ireland with the weapons that lay at the right hand of the Executive, yet because they would not make use of the Crimes Act it became necessary to rake up an ancient statute from the waste-paper basket in order that the Government might save their face, and make some attempt to put down lawlessness and disorder. The House would have excused the Chief Secretary for having made these fantastic statements, if he had also said that it was his duty and the duty of his colleagues to govern Ireland, not according to Nationalist ideas, but with a firm hand, as it ought to be governed. The right hon. Gentleman would find that the firmer he was the more respected he would be in Ireland. There was nothing the Irish people disliked so much in a Government as weakness. He begged to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £100.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said he had great pleasure in seconding the Amendment. Here was a proposal for a supplementary sum of £2,500, £1,500 of which was to go into the pockets of the two learned Gentlemen opposite, and yet there was not a single protest from the Nationalist or the Labour Party, not a single word from them in support of practical economy. He made no complaint of the salaries of the two law officers which were, he believed, £5,000 and £2,500, but what he wished to know was, was the extra £1,500 for extra work done by them. After the admissions made by the Chief Secretary and the two law officers in reply to questions about the number of prosecutions in Ireland, amounting to many hundreds, in which they had been able to effect only some half-dozen convictions, their efforts did not appear to have been very successful. He entirely and heartily agreed with the mover of the reduction that there had been an absolute breakdown in the administration of the law in Ireland, and that the law officers had signally failed in their duty. He also agreed that their failure was largely due to the spirit infused into the Government of Ireland by the Chief Secretary. No one in the House would forget that night when the Chief Secretary brought his fist down on the table with a bang saying he would do nothing, after cases had been brought home to him which were absolutely unanswerable as to the lawless state of Ireland. He (Mr. Corbett) did not think that the policy of doing nothing carried out most effectively by the law officers required extra pay, and it was a scandal that the House should be asked to vote this money to law officers who had failed in their duty.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£2,500,' and insert '£2,400.'—(*Captain Craig.*)—instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That '£2,500' stand part of the said Resolution."

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said the hon. and gallant Gentleman who moved this reduction had dwelt at great length on the real or imaginary increase of crime in Ireland during the last few months, and had charged the Government with grave dereliction of duty. But if they took the whole of the crime, real or imaginary, in Ireland and in England, and considered it in proportion to the population of the two countries they would find there was considerably less crime in Ireland than in England. And when one read such documents as the depositions of the inspecting officer sent down in the first instance to investigate the Glenahiry outrage he had considerable doubt whether any outrage at all was perpetrated.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: The law officers have taken an entirely different view from the hon. Gentleman.

MR. TOMKINSON said the officer on that occasion stated that Lord Ashtown himself, whom he saw the next day, seemed to treat the matter as a hugh joke. There had recently been a special kind of lawlessness in Ireland in the form of cattle-driving, but apparently great misapprehension existed in connection with that form of lawlessness. There was no cattle stealing in the country; there was no cattle maiming, no wilful injury done to cattle. This cattle-driving was done as a protest against the action of people guilty in the past of a far worse crime than that of cattle driving, namely, the driving of men and women off the land.

Captain CRAIG asked whether he understood from the hon. Member's observations that he was in favour of cattle-driving.

Mr. TOMKINSON said that all he said was that the crime had been much exaggerated and made out to be far more serious than it actually was. Much worse than cattle-driving had been done in the past by the people who owned the land, because they had driven the men and women off that land on to the bogs and rocks, and on the good lands only cattle and sheep were allowed. An Act had been passed for England and Wales for the purpose of restoring the people to the land and, if necessary, compulsorily acquiring the land for that purpose. That was all the Irish people asked for. Hon. Members could not know what was done in the shape of evictions after the great famine of 1848. One noble Lord told a high official that he had evicted 1,800 of these people, and when that noble Lord was asked where those people had gone to, the answer was so bitter and cynical that it would not bear repetition. He believed that a more conciliatory and reasonable treatment would do more to make the Irish people contented than such coercion as was advocated by hon. Members opposite. As an illustration of the conciliation which he suggested, he might refer to a case which had been brought to his knowledge by one of the Land Commissioners —Mr. Bailey. In the case of that particular estate, the owner and the occupiers were at daggers drawn. The owner was informed that his life was not safe and he thought of getting out of the country and going to live in the South of France. Mr. Bailey hearing this went down to see if he could be of any service in the matter. He saw the landlord, who told him that he was willing to sell his land, but that he could not take less than twenty-five years purchase, whilst great pressure was being put upon him to accept twenty-one-and-a-half years purchase. Mr. Bailey said that he sat down with the owner and went into figures, and in a quarter of an hour convinced him that if he got twenty-three years purchase he would be quite satisfied with it. Mr. Bailey then went round and saw the Tenants Committee. He got at that Committee through the priest. He found them most reasonable men, and when he put the facts before them they agreed to increase their offer and give twenty-three years purchase, provided that included in the purchase were 2,000 acres of grass land for which they were willing to give whatever was asked. In that conciliatory way the whole difficulty on that estate was settled, and the next that Mr. Bailey heard was that they had elected the landlord to be the chairman of their Local District Board and had all agreed to preserve the game on the land for him. He submitted that such action as that did more good for Ireland than the coercion suggested by hon. Members opposite.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said that after the speech of the hon. Member for Crewe the Chief Secretary and the law officers might well exclaim: "Save us from our friends." It was very interesting to learn from the hon. Member that a well-paid official in the Government of Ireland, Mr. Bailey, considered it within the scope of his duty to have a casual conversation with the hon. Member regarding the action of a certain landlord in Ireland. The hon. Member said that Mr. Bailey told him he had persuaded this landlord to come to terms with his tenants and accept twenty-three years purchase for the land. [A Nationalist Member: "Too much."] There was a telling answer to that, namely, that the Leader of the Nationalist Party got twenty-four and-a-half years purchase for land he sold.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): That is not true.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON asked whether it was in order for an hon. Member to say a statement by another hon. Member was not true.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I presume the hon. Member meant it was incorrect.

Mr. BARRIE said he did not object to the interruption, but he could not accept the correction of the hon. Member until the figures were placed before the House. So far as the question of the outrage at the house of Lord Ashtown was concerned he was not quite sure——

*Mr. SPEAKER said that since the hon. Member had spoken he had ascertained that there was no charge in this Vote for any proceedings in connection with Lord Ashtown's matter, and therefore the hon. Member would not be in order in going into that.

Mr. BARRIE said that that being so, he would pass from that item and deal at once with the Vote before the House. This was a Vote of £2,500 for special legal expenses incurred during the last six months. The additional revenue which went into the pockets of the law officers was £1,500, which was at the rate of £3,000 a year. He complained that this was the third Supplementary Vote asked for since the session began and a fourth would be coming before the House for the constabulary. Those four Votes combined meant a total increase of the law charges for Ireland of something like £20,000, due to the existence of a weak Government. The question was: Had any effective service been rendered to the country for this expenditure; had respect for the law been restored, and were peaceful citizens in the south and west of Ireland allowed to pursue their callings without molestation? The fact was that in Ireland last year there were 381 cases of cattle-driving, and proceedings were taken in only eighty-one cases, and out of 572 persons prosecuted in connection with these drives only five were imprisoned. In 1907 372 agrarian outrages were reported, or 138 more than in 1906, being the greatest number since 1903. Proceedings were taken in forty-two cases, and there were only five convictions. In 367 cases no one was made responsible for the outrages. It was clear that since the dropping of the Peace Preservation Act in 1906 the number of shooting outrages had been four times as numerous as in the previous year. In 1886 the then Chief Secretary found over 4,800 boycotted persons in Ireland. In 1892 that number was reduced to fifteen, and it was only since the Government came into power that boycotting had become rampant. As to cattle-driving, if the Chief Secretary had directed prosecutions against the cowards who instigated the people to commit the crime it would never have assumed such large proportions. The action of the right hon. Gentleman in Ireland was very different from the action of his colleague the Secretary of State for India in India, where there had been disturbances which they all regretted and where peremptory measures had been instituted in the interests of that country and in the name of duty and common-sense.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.): The Secretary for India is one of my colleagues, and he is responsible for and approves of my action.

Mr. BARRIE said that that was one of the glaring inconsistencies which were not altogether unknown among the members of the present Cabinet. Nothing was to him more painful than to notice the growth of crime and want of respect for the law owing to the injudicious speeches of both the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General. At the meeting at Belfast the Attorney-General had alluded to the Chief Secretary as "his dictator." Loose speeches in Ireland meant licence, and licence had brought the law into contempt. If the Government would use the weapons ready to their hand, and convince the people in the unsettled parts of Ireland that they had had enough of lawlessness, a very different state of affairs would prevail in a very few months.

*The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): I desire in the first place entirely to repudiate what has been attributed to me that I at any time endeavoured to place the responsibility for my actions on my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that I attempted in any way to throw blame upon him or to subordinate myself to him in any way that was not consonant to my position. As first law officer in Ireland I am responsible for the enforcement of the criminal law, and never have I attempted to throw the responsibility on the Chief Secretary. Reference has been made to the meeting I attended at Belfast last autumn, which seems to have had an irritating effect on hon. Members for Ulster constituencies. It was one of the largest meetings I ever attended, and one of the most enthusiastic. Ever since hon. Members opposite have been seizing on certain expressions I used, and twisting and turning those statements into meanings they were never intended to bear.

CAPTAIN CRAIG asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether he was aware that the Chief Secretary himself, on leaving the meeting, turned round to a friend and said—

> "That was an enthusiastic meeting, but there were some people who were opposed——"

[Cries of "Order."]

*MR. CHERRY: That is another of what they call yarns in Ireland. There was an interruption during the course of the meeting by someone in the gallery, which led me to say that the assertion that I had been dictated to by my right hon. friend——

MR. BARRIE: I quoted the exact words of the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. CHERRY: I was only explaining how I came to use the words. I did not for a moment say that I had been dictated to by anybody, but I said that I would not be dictated to by anybody save the Prime Minister or the Chief Secretary. I meant that the Chief Secretary, being a member of the Government, responsible for the government of Ireland, and a Member of the Cabinet, and the Prime Minister at the head of the Government, were the only persons to convey to me the decisions of the Government in regard to matters generally. I, not being a member of the Cabinet, had no power to determine any question of policy. But as regards the administration of the criminal law, that is my duty, and I never for one moment intended, nor do I intend, to repudiate responsibility for that. There has never been the slightest difference between my right hon. friend and myself as regards the prosecutions. He is quite familiar with everything that I have done, and he has agreed to everything that I have done and everything I have submitted to him. Our object has been, whether right or wrong is for the House to determine, to enforce the ordinary law strictly and fairly, and not to go one inch outside the ordinary law. We have sought to be perfectly impartial, and we thought that if we persisted in that course we would cure what is a great evil in Ireland—distrust of the law. But it will take some time to do that. You cannot expect the sentiments of a nation to be changed in a day, and it needs that we should persist in the course we have adopted. We have persisted in it, and we have up to the present moment, I think, had very gratifying results; because as a matter of fact, as everyone knows who knows anything about affairs in Ireland, the disturbances which prevailed in Ireland during the autumn have died down very greatly, and the country is far and away quieter than it was in the months of October and November last. Cattle-driving has almost entirely disappeared; there are no outrages and very little serious crime, and I think that that is in great measure due to the policy of the Government in fairly administering the ordinary law and in no way seeking to use the much-disliked Crimes Act, or in packing juries, or by indirect means endeavouring to obtain convictions. We relied on a straightforward presentation of the case for the Crown to the jury. Although we have had obstacles, acquittals and disagreements, where we thought there ought to have been convictions, which I regret very much, yet I believe that the benefit to the country will be greater by our administering the law impartially than by any means that might be adopted to secure convictions in the way which I have indicated. The hon. and gallant Gentleman referred to Larkin's case, and said that the change of venue in that instance was due to me. He is completely under a misapprehension The application for a change of venue was made on behalf of Larkin himself, and I very carefully inquired into the matter before I assented to it. Affidavits were filed which showed that undoubtedly there was very great prejudice against Larkin in Belfast among the class from whom the jurors would have been drawn. It was asserted, I think, with some truth, that although Larkin was prosecuted for a very trivial assault, the real attempt among the people of Belfast was to have him punished for being a leader of the strike. I assented to the change of venue to the County of Dublin, which, as everyone knows, is a county where the jurors are of the very highest character and before whom you can obtain a fair and impartial trial. I do not think that I was doing anything very irregular; I was endeavouring, as I always endeavour, to obtain a fair and impartial trial by a tribunal which would not only be fair but would have no suspicion of unfairness. There were other persons who were charged with assaults in Belfast during the riots which arose, and the hon. and gallant Gentleman asked why there had not been a change of venue in those cases. The venue was not changed because the accused did not ask for it. Now, as to cattle-driving, I have never said at any time anything in favour of it; I should be very sorry to do so. I have heard, however, a great deal of gross exaggeration as regards the seriousness of the evil. Cattle-driving is a crime if partaken in by a large number of people. But as a matter of fact, the cattle trade has never been more prosperous in Ireland than in the course of the last year. I have never suggested for one moment that there was anything excusable in it. I think it is a form of intimidation of a particularly bad kind, and it is a matter that ought to be stopped if it can be put a stop to. We prosecuted in every case in which there was evidence to bring before a jury. We have brought people before the magistrates and had them bound over to keep the peace—a far larger number than that mentioned by the hon. Gentleman. A large number of the persons brought before the magistrates declined to give bail, and, like the suffragettes in London, they went to gaol. I think that several hundreds went to gaol.

Mr. BARRIE: A number of them were released immediately afterwards, and there was that distinction between their case and that of the suffragettes.

*Mr. CHERRY: The hon. Member is completely mistaken. Not one person, so far as I know, was released, certainly not since last October.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: Are there hundreds of persons still in prison owing to those charges?

*Mr. CHERRY: No, Sir; I am happy to say that there are none at present. Those offences I refer to were committed in the months of October and November, and the persons served out their sentences and were released. As far as I know there are no persons in prison at present on those charges.

Mr. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston): May I ask if they were treated as first-class or second-class misdemeanants?

*Mr. CHERRY: I really cannot give the hon. Member the information for which he asks. The amount of the Vote has been referred to. We regret to come to the House with a Supplementary Vote, but it arises in a great measure from the prosecutions for cattle-driving. I would point out that the amount of the original Vote and the Supplementary Vote together is only £65,000, which is a good deal less than the average during the time the late Government was in office. There were only two years while that Government was in office in which the amount was less than this. In 1901 the Votes for the Departments of Agriculture were added to the law charges, and in 1899 the sum of £8,000 per annum were added to recoup the high sheriff the expenses of receiving at the general assizes. So if you compare the amounts in previous years, in fact from 1881 to the present year, you will find that, although the amount this year is slightly in excess of what it was last year, it is considerably less than what it was ten or fifteen years ago. If you go back only to 1901, the amount was nearly £70,000, and we are £5,000 to the good in 1907. It is quite true that we are £3,000 in excess of last year, but last year the amount was exceedingly small and the lowest it has ever been. I do not think that there are any other matters that the House would like me to explain.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said that the right hon. Gentleman was entitled in one respect to the sympathy of the House. He had been so unfortunate on more than one occasion recently as to make use of rather picturesque language in Ireland, and the brutal Saxon, taking the words to mean exactly what they said, were anxious to know why the Attorney-General for Ireland had committed himself in that way. Not long ago the right hon. Gentleman was explaining to the House that when he called his countrymen West African savages he desired it to be understood that the words were used in the Pickwickian sense.

*MR. CHERRY: I never called my fellow-countrymen West African savages. I said that cattle-driving might lead to a state of things worse than that among the West African savages.

LORD R. CECIL said he understood that the right hon. Gentleman did not call them directly West African savages, but only conditionally West African savages. That afternoon the right hon. Gentleman had been asked something about the Chief Secretary being his dictator, and he said that that was only because some other people were not his dictators, and, therefore, only in that sense was the Chief Secretary his dictator. But later on he had disclaimed any responsibility in connection with policy in Ireland, and consequently all his acts were approved by the Chief Secretary, after discussion with him. Therefore, it seemed to be the fact, to the mere Saxon mind, that the Chief Secretary in truth did direct his action, and when the Attorney-General referred to the right hon. Gentleman as his dictator he was not very far out. What was it that the Government had said about this matter over and over again? They said that they had endeavoured to enforce the ordinary law. That was their perpetual statement. But they must again ask how it was that the hon. Member for North Westmeath was allowed to go about inciting these cattle-drivers week after week, and month after month, in the most open and unblushing way, and that the right hon. Gentleman was only able to obtain the assistance of the Judge of the Land Court and get the hon. Member shut up for contempt of Court.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Member must not say I obtained the assistance of the Judge. Mr. Justice Ross acted with the most perfect independence. The noble Lord must not say I got him.

LORD R. CECIL said he owed the Chief Secretary an apology. He believed the right hon. Gentleman had always said that the Government had nothing to do with shutting up the hon. Member for Westmeath.

MR. BIRRELL: Hear, hear.

LORD R. CECIL said that that made the case all the stronger against the right hon. Gentleman. He apologised for having suggested that the Chief Secretary had even indirectly desired to enforce the law against the hon. Member for North Westmeath. But the broad fact remained that cattle-driving went on until the hon. Member for North Westmeath was shut up, and when he was shut up cattle-driving began to come to an end. The Attorney-General for Ireland had the courage to say that the whole thing must be likened to the proceedings against the suffragettes. The suffragettes, who, whatever might be thought of their methods, had the sympathy of a large section of the House in the objects they had in view, had been treated not as first-class but as second-class misdemeanants. It was characteristic of the procedure of the Government that they treated cattle-driving, or appeared to treat it, as a matter of less importance than the rather foolish riots of the suffragettes in the streets of London, and it was because they had adopted that attitude that they had been compelled over and over again to protest against their action. The Attorney-General for Ireland had used a very striking phrase when he said he had never said a word in favour of cattle-driving. Let the House conceive its being necessary for a law officer of the Crown to say he had never said a word in favour of what he afterwards admitted to be a scandalous and outrageous proceeding! That unconscious observation displayed more of the mind of the Government than a great deal of their deliberate utterances. That had been the whole attitude of the Government—it was unnecessary to quote again the statements that had been made by the various members of the Government—and the result had been failure of the law and a failure to obtain convictions. He had listened with the greatest possible regret to the speech of the hon. Member for Crewe who, though very widely respected in that House and whose utterances naturally carried great weight with the House, had committed himself to an elaborate minimising of the actual outrages that had occurred and a defence of such things as cattle-driving. Surely that was very unfortunate.

MR. TOMKINSON said he had defended cattle-driving from the grossly unfair charges made against it in regard to cattle stealing and cattle maiming, such as Sheridan had perpetrated under the late Government and never been prosecuted for, and he had said that there was one thing worse than cattle-driving—the driving of men and women from the soil.

LORD R. CECIL said the hon. Member had forgotten what appeared to him the most indefensible statement he had made, referring to an outrage which they were not allowed to discuss on that occasion, that the evidence in that case had made him doubt whether any outrages had taken place in Ireland at all. That was really a most unfortunate observation for any English Member to make. Outrages had taken place and very serious outrages. Men had been shot, many houses had been fired into, and even this cattle-driving for which they heard these apologies in the House had ended in outrage of a most serious character. It began as so many things seemed to begin in Ireland, in a comparatively mild and unimportant way, and it gradually grew, partly through the indifference of the Irish Government and partly, he must say, through the culpable language often used by English politicians in connection with outrages, until it became a very serious and terrible evil. What really was cattle-driving? The hon. Member said it was not cattle stealing. Nobody had ever said it was cattle stealing. Nor was it cattle maiming. That was sufficiently evident. If cattle were maimed they could not be driven. But cattle-driving was none the less a very serious offence and operated very seriously to the injury of the cattle. The hon. Member represented a very wealthy constituency largely given up to dairy farming. What would his constituents think if their cattle were driven off their farm, sometimes all night long, and left to find their way back? It was a very serious offence, and it was no answer to say it was better than driving men. What the hon. Member meant exactly by driving men he did not know, but the only instance he had given was from the year 1848, and he really said to the House—and this was exceedingly characteristic of these Irish debates—that because an Irish landlord rightly or wrongly was alleged to have behaved in a brutal and unfeeling way in 1848, that was in some way which absolutely passed his comprehension a palliation for those who drove cattle in 1907. It really was a perfect scandal that arguments of that kind should be used. The truth was that if history could only be wiped off the face of the earth, if they could only forget everything that had happened in Ireland in the past, if they could start with a perfectly clean slate and deal with the thing as it now was, they would be very far along the road indeed towards the pacification of Ireland which they all desired. But these references to 1848, and sometimes further back still, did nothing but harm, and were perfectly irrelevant to the real issue. The real question that the House had to consider on this Vote was whether it was or was not right that the law should be enforced in Ireland. That was the only issue. It was not whether the law was or was not perfect. He did not believe there was any such thing as a perfect law. The question was whether they were going to submit to outrages against the law, to lawless attempts to put pressure on the Government in order to produce a change in the law, and to put pressure upon individuals in order to prevent them from exercising their legal rights. That was the only question before them, and that was the only reason why he desired to criticise the Government, because he did not think they had discharged what was after all the first and by far the most important duty of a Government, namely, to preserve the law in all parts of His Majesty's dominions.

MR. STANLEY WILSON said he should like to say one or two words in regard to the reduction his hon. and gallant friend had moved. He was glad that the Attorney-General had repudiated the views of the hon. Member for Crewe with regard to criminal offences in Ireland. After the brilliant speech of the noble Lord, and the severe castigation that he had administered to the hon. Member, it was unnecessary for anybody else to deal with him. He could not help expressing surprise at the absence of hon. Members below the Gangway on such an occasion when an important debate was going on with regard to the country from which they came. And where were the Labour Members who were always ready to protest against unnecessary expenditure, and where were those stringent economists many of whom had gained seats at the last general election by pledging themselves to economy? They were asked to pass a Vote of £2,500 for the bad administration of the present Government in Ireland in dealing with these prosecutions, money which had been absolutely wasted, and might just as well have been thrown into the sea. As everybody realised, never probably in the history of Ireland had the country been in a worse condition than during the last two or three months. He heard voices protesting against that statement, but he stuck to it, and he said moreover that that condition was due to the methods of His Majesty's Government. They were asked to pay this large increase, and he was there to make a strong protest against it. £1,500 of this money went into the pockets of the titular head of the legal profession in Ireland and his understudy. These hon. Gentlemen had absolutely failed to do their duty in Ireland. They had absolutely failed to gain convictions in any prosecutions they had brought about, even in cases where the guilt was obvious to anybody who heard the case as it was being tried. That was solely due to the administration of the Government. Had they chosen to employ the Crimes Act they could have seen that law and order were enforced, but the Chief Secretary had refused because once he was opposed to the Act. The Government stood convicted of the grossest mismanagement of Irish affairs. It was only last year that the fullest warning was given from those benches by Members from Ireland of what was bound to occur if they continued in the way in which they were going at that time. The Chief Secretary called those hon. Members carrion crows, and up to the present date the right hon. Gentleman had never offered an apology.

MR. BIRRELL: I remember distinctly in this House saying I regretted having made that statement.

MR. STANLEY WILSON said he was speaking from his own knowledge. He had not made that assertion intentionally and certainly if the right hon. Gentleman had withdrawn that expression he withdrew his own remark. He had risen only to make a strong protest against this unjustifiable expenditure upon the law officers in Ireland.

MR. BIRRELL: I cannot, of course, altogether explain the absence of hon. Members below the Gangway, whether they come from Ireland or whether they are Labour Members, but one reason occurs to me why they or any other sensible men should be absent. All this has been said before. I can honestly say that with the exception of a remark or two from the noble Lord, everything has been said before that could possibly be thought of. Possibly to some hon. Members once is enough. As for the general discussion, everybody knows perfectly well that it has been made perfectly plain both by myself and others that there is a strong difference of opinion between us and them as to what was a proper and wise course for the Irish Administration to pursue under the circumstances of last autumn. They say we ought to have taken more active measures, that we ought by enforcing the Crimes Act to have filled the gaols of Galway and Roscommon. We thought otherwise.

The allegation that that marvellous fetish, the Crimes Act, has only to be proclaimed in Ireland for peace and order to reign from one end of the country to the other is a ridiculous statement and one that it is impossible to support by any reference to history. I am not going into the question at length. I have stated publicly and privately what my views are on the question. An hon. Gentleman who is not in his place told us that he would never forget as long as he lived the day when I banged the box, and said I would do nothing. But, oddly enough, although the hon. Member declared that that incident had burnt itself into his memory as the most awful within his experience, he nevertheless grossly misquoted the Chief Secretary by ascribing to him the statement that he would do nothing. What I really said was "I won't," meaning thereby that I would not put into force the provisions of the Crimes Act. To say that I meant to do nothing and that my right hon. friend intended to do nothing is disproved by the existence of the Supplementary Vote which the House is discussing. The Irish Office took all the steps which the ordinary law provided. What do hon. Members want? Do they say that we are not to prosecute these persons or put the ordinary law in motion? And do they say that we ought not to have changed the venue to Dublin in order to obtain a trial of persons not on the spot where the crimes took place? Do they say that we were not to employ the law officers of the Crown, when it was put to us by hon. Members opposite that we should employ these most expensive functionaries? In order to give importance to these trials we did employ them, at all events, hence this £2,500 and we have to pay them. I do not wish to go into the question of whether the law officers are paid too much or not. It would be most disagreeable for me, situated as I am, to do so, but no doubt the question will some day be raised and it will be most disagreeable to my right hon. friends. But at any rate we were bound to put the only law into operation, and we did it. It cost more money than we estimated and we have to come for a further Vote. Then hon. Members say: "What did you get for your money?" That is another important peculiarity of theirs. They evidently want a butcher's bill to show that something happened and that certain convictions followed. Certain convictions did follow as a matter of fact. I cannot see how hon. Members can object to the Vote unless they argue that we should have disregarded the law from the first, and say that the state of things in Ireland in connection with cattle-driving was so alarming and appalling that the ordinary law should be put on one side. This Vote is caused by our putting the law into force. Nobody can deny that we have put it into force in many cases. Every step known to the ordinary law was taken in our anxious endeavour to obtain the ends of justice through and by the ordinary law. This is a proposition which I shall never be ashamed of. I am surprised that the noble Lord, who is a stickler, I hope, for the English Constitution in all its forms, should seem to think that it was our duty at once to seek to disregard the ordinary law and rush into extraordinary, unpopular, and demoralising methods. The noble Lord dislikes historical palliations of cattle-driving, and I quite agree, if we could only wipe out history, if we could say with the old woman that she never read history on the ground that bygones should be bygones. What happened when I made that very remark at luncheon at Londonderry, and said—

> "What a glorious thing it would be if only you could forget your glorious history, your famous siege, your walls, your statues, and other memorials of that old world terrible and violent dispute"?

A Tory newspaper next morning had a most furious article referring to that speech, and accused me of having the impudence to come down to Londonderry and say I did not want to see their walls, or their statues, or their monuments, simply because I said I hoped to live to see these old, unhappy, far off things forgotten. You cannot do that even in England. I remember last year being in charge of an Education Bill. Had not history something to do with that? Had not the noble Lord's history something to do with that? I agree with the noble Lord, if only we could induce Ireland and England to forget these things and look on the situation both as regards education in England, and law and order in Ireland, from the point of view of how things exist at the present moment rather than go back to those old world stories, it would be a desirable thing. If the noble Lord is ever Chief Secretary for Ireland, as I understand he may be next year—if we are all to be swept away and we are to have firm law and order established in the next nine months, surely it is really not worth while for the House to trouble itself much longer over this £2,500.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I will make one more effort to convince the Chief Secretary that the action of my hon. friends behind me from Ireland are not quite so child-like as the right hon. Gentleman would have it appear. Their objection is that these jury trials and expensive changes of venue were taken at a stage long after it had become apparent that they were totally futile. Nobody has ever said that the Crimes Act is a talisman or a fetish containing any magic for doing away with crime, but it enables a great many of these cases to be dealt with by summary jurisdiction, and this in itself would have produced the necessary effect upon the minds of evildoers. I will tell the Chief Secretary what some of us think of his conduct in not making use of the Crimes Act. We think it is pedantic and pharasaical, if not something worse, for it is accompanied by a cynical indifference to the sufferings of individuals, which ought not to have been indulged in by a British Minister.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) said he had risen only for a minute to say that there were many hon. Members on that side of the House who absolutely disagreed with the statements which had just been made, and who were desirous of supporting the Chief Secretary in the course which he had taken. Hon. Members on the opposite side of the House wanted the right hon. Gentleman to put the Crimes Act in force; but they must know, and everybody who had looked at recent Irish history must know that to have adopted the Crimes Act during this recent agitation would have made things ten times worse. The right hon. Gentleman had, however, by gentle means and patience quelled the agitation which was troublesome, and had succeeded in bringing Ireland out of it even though it had a strong grievance behind it, because of these untenanted grazing farms being let under a system which was an evasion of all the advantages which recent land legislation had granted to Ireland, namely, the eleven months system under which no tenancy could grow up. Everyone knew that in Ireland the moment a man went on the land the tenant right began to inure, but in these cases the men did not become tenants at all, they only acquired the right for their cattle to go on the ground and eat the grass. It seemed to him to be a strange thing that hon. Members opposite should resist so long for a second time this Vote for criminal prosecutions when the whole of their speeches had been devoted to saying that there had not been criminal prosecutions enough. It seemed to him a most inconsistent position for men who were complaining that the Government had not used the administration of the law in overtaking criminals to set to work to complain of what they had done. He could only say once more that he and his fellow Members on that side of the House had the greatest admiration for the patience and the reticence which had been shown by the Chief Secretary in this matter, and were delighted at the success which he had achieved. The reason they had not had more convictions was obvious. When hon. Members opposite set about prosecutions they meant to have convictions even if it was necessary that the judge or magistrate should take a conviction in his pocket. [Cries of "Withdraw."] The reason why they could not get convictions from Irish juries was because the neighbours of the accused were in sympathy with him. [Ironical cries of "Hear, hear."] Well, what was the jury system at all except, as he understood it, the right of trial, which had been acquired and enjoyed for so many centuries, by twelve of one's peers. If their peers did not disapprove of what they had done then they went free

LORD R. CECIL said he would remind the hon. Gentleman that every juryman was sworn to find a verdict according to the evidence whether he approved or disapproved.

MR. BYLES said in that case it appeared that the juries did not think the evidence sufficient, and hon. Members opposite must remember that it was impossible to coerce a nation. What the Government had been doing was to try to persuade the people to respect the law which governed them. Why did the people despise the law? Because we had not given them laws of which they approved, and unless a Government could govern a nation in accordance with the will of a nation they had failed. The object of the present Government was to make people in Ireland respect the law as the people in England and Scotland respected it, and in that endeavour the Government had the support of their followers.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would ask the hon. Member to remember that a nation could not be coerced when the Licensing Bill came on for Second Reading. He had only risen to address a Question to the Chief Secretary, who had waxed extremely indignant because, he said, hon. Members on that side of the House desired him to do something, and when he had done something, and there had been an increase in the law charges, they objected to pay for putting the ordinary law into motion. The right hon. Gentleman said: "Enough of this objection to this £2,500. Let us have our £2,500 and go home to dinner." He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was in the House when the Attorney-General for Ireland said that the Government would not pack juries in order to obtain convictions. Of course the word "packed" might be taken in two senses, and what the Irish Nationalists called "packing" was challenging juries who were likely to disregard their oath, and not return a verdict according to the evidence. What they on that side of the House meant was putting on the jury a man who would obey his oath, and who when a breach of the law had been proved, would give a verdict which would secure a conviction. It seemed to him that the Chief Secretary made a little slip when he said that they had taken all the steps they could to put the ordinary law in force. In England and Scotland, and he thought it was the same in Ireland, a juror could be challenged if it was thought that he was interested on either side or that he was not likely to do his duty according to his oath. He presumed that that was correct as he had not been interrupted. That being so, the argument brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman was fallacious.

MR. BIRRELL: Why?

SIR F. BANBURY said the right hon. Gentleman had not taken all the steps he could to enforce the ordinary law.

MR. BIRRELL: We did challenge.

SIR F. BANBURY asked, if that was so, how the Attorney-General reconciled that statement with the statement that he would not pack juries to obtain convictions. The challenging of jurors was done to remove men who, it was thought, would not give a verdict in accordance with the evidence, and to put on others who would. The Nationalist Members called that packing. That was a misnomer, and the word should never have been applied. He felt a certain amount of sorrow for the Attorney-General in having to get up and answer the charge brought against him. It seemed to him that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was in what in slang language was called a tight place. The last argument advanced was the very worst, namely, that the present Government were doing no worse than the Unionist Government did ten or fifteen years ago, because they were spending no more money. By those words the right hon. and learned Gentleman condemned himself. Ten or fifteen years ago the Unionist Government spent a certain amount of money in enforcing law and order, and the result was that when the Chief Secretary took office he said that Ireland was in a more peaceful state than it had been for 600 years. Was it not worth while to spend a little money to obtain that result? If the right hon. and learned Gentleman had followed in the footsteps of the Unionist Government the House would not have been asked to vote this additional sum. He had no objection to vote not only what was asked, but £5,000 if the right hon. Gentleman did something for it, but he did object to pay him fees to conduct cases in Court when he knew perfectly well what was going to happen. If he did not know, he was not fit for the great position which he occupied. Over and over again Judges had summed up for convictions and over and over again juries had disagreed or acquitted the persons accused. They could not get him to believe that a lawyer of the right hon. Gentleman's position and learning did not know when he went into Court that he was going to get a good fee and nothing else.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 216; Noes, 49. (Division List No. 45.)

AYES.

Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H (St. Pancras, N.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey

Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats,Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch,George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt Hn.SirW.Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M. (Aberdeen,W.).
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Priestley,W.E.B. (Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H. (Somerset,E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampton
Waring, Walter
Wason,Rt.Hn E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt. Hn.SirAlex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt Hn.A.J (CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.(Worc
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Craik, Sir Henry
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kimber, Sir Henry
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson,Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Percy, Earl
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith,Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)

Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Captain Craig and Mr. T. L. Corbett.

Resolution agreed to.

LONDON ELECTRIC SUPPLY BILL [LORDS].

Motion made and Question "That the Lords Message [5th March], 'That it is desirable that the London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords], the London Electric Supply Bill [Lords], and the London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords] be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament,' be now considered" (by Order).—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means*)—put and agreed to.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I have very reluctantly to move "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Resolution." At the present moment I express no opinion at all about the merits of the Bill itself. I do not think it would be fair to do so, because it would prejudice the consideration of the proposals contained in the Bill. I do not think, however, that the course suggested in the Resolution is the best method of investigating the merits of this Bill, and more especially of investigating the details of these various propositions. As all those who have been engaged upon the investigation of this question know, it is a very difficult one indeed. There have been several proposals brought before the House for the supply of electric power to London during the last four or five years, all of them more or less of a different character, and up to the present we have not succeeded in securing any proposal which has obtained the confidence of the House or of the Committee after inquiry into the details of the Bills sent upstairs. My own personal opinion is that no settlement of this very thorny and complicated problem is possible unless some measure of agreement is come to between all the parties engaged. There is a very general feeling that something ought to be done, and done quickly, for the purpose of supplying London with cheap electricity for power purposes. I think it is a great scandal that something has not been done before, because, after all, it is almost entirely a business matter, and it is a great pity that it should have become a question which has engaged parties as if it were purely a political problem, which it is not. I cannot help feeling, however, that we are approximating towards a reasonable settlement and a compromise. If these Bills go to a Committee of the Lords and are examined there carefully, I think that by the time they come down here the parties will be in a better position—I will not say frame of mind—to consider the best way of putting something through that will ensure general consent. That is one reason why I think it will not be facilitating inquiry into this subject to have a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. If a Committee of the kind suggested in the Resolution were set up, what would happen? The Bills would go to that Committee who would arrive at some conclusion with regard to them in the course of the next few weeks, probably before opinion has matured for the full consideration of this problem from the broader point of view. I think that, even before a Committee considers it in this House there ought to be a conference between all the parties concerned to see whether there are not some general principles upon which agreement can be secured. I must, therefore, oppose, and I do so reluctantly, this proposal that a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament should have this question referred to it. I do not wish it to be inferred that there is any opposition on the part of the Government to any one of these proposals or any of these Bills. I shall confine myself at present to resisting this proposal because I do not think it will accomplish the object which those who wish for a cheap electrical supply for London have in mind. For that reason alone I oppose the proposition on the Paper, and I trust the House will see that it is not in the public interest to pass it. I therefore move "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Resolution."

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Resolution."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*)—put and agreed to.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. J. A. PEASE, in moving the adjournment of the House, gave notice of a Motion for to-morrow to suspend the Eleven o'Clock Rule.

*Mr. MORTON (Sutherland) said that as they had got through the business early he hoped that they might be allowed to proceed with some of the Bills on the Paper. He trusted that the Government would not persist in preventing them doing business when they had got two or three hours which they might conveniently spend in discussing the Bills of private Members, some of which had been before the House and the country for years. He could not understand why the Government should intervene and stop business being done. The Government had offered no explanation, and if the Whips were consulted they would reply that they had got orders to proceed in this way. He objected to the business of the country being stopped in that way. He would like to see some of those Bills sent to Committee. They had set up a lot of Committees for the purpose of doing business, and there was but little for them to do just now. There was one measure, the Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill, which might conveniently be dealt with in this way. That was a measure which had been before the House for a good many years. He would not go into the merits of the Bill, but he thought they might be allowed to discuss it now, especially as that might be their only opportunity. He hoped the Government would recognise that the unpaid Members of the House were willing to stop and do the business of the country, and he hoped the Government would consent to allow the House to proceed with the Orders of the Day.

Question, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes after Eight o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 18th March, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill (Petition for additional Provision); Bristol Docks Bill [H.L.]; Ards and Bangor Railways Bill; London United Tramways Bill; Cambrian Railways Bill (Petition for Bill)—Examiners' Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next.

Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.]; Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill.—Reported, without Amendments.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway, and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Message from the Commons that they disagree with this House in the Resolution communicated to them on the 5th instant, viz.:—"That it is desirable that the said Bills be referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament."

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES.

The Proceedings of 11th August, 1905, relating to the presentation of a return of the cost of the several Colonies, Protectorates, and Dependencies of the British Empire at the expense of the British Exchequer for each of the years from 1853 to 1903, in the same form, as nearly as may be, as the information supplied in the House of Commons Paper, No. 417, of Session 1881; and also their population, and the annual value of their trade with the United Kingdom, so far as it can be given, for the latest year for which figures are available. Ordered to be vacated.

Papers relating to the machinery and cost of elections in certain British Colonies.

CHECKWEIGHING AT LIME AND CEMENT WORKS, ETC.

Reports to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by the Departpartmental Committees on checkweighing in:—Cement works and chalk quarries; and limeworks and limestone quarries.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES

No. 3962. Servia (trade for 1906).

No. 3963. Hungary (economic condition, 1906–1907).

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CRIMINAL APPEALS.

Rules made with the approval of the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State by the Lord Chief Justice and the Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal.

TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED LOAN.

Treasury Minute, dated 25th February, 1908, embodying the Treasury guarantee of the Transvaal Treasury Bills issued under Section 1 (3) of the Transvaal Loan (Guarantee) Act, 1907, on 1st February, 1908, to a total amount of £500,000.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

THRIFT AND CREDIT BANKS BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to facilitate the formation of Thrift and Credit Banks was presented by the Lord Wenlock; read 1^{a}, and to be printed. [No. 31.]

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Acts relating to elementary education in England and Wales was presented by the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday, the 30th instant. [No. 32.]

OFFICIAL DIRECTORY OF NURSES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to provide for the establishment of an official directory of nurses was presented by the Lord Balfour; read 1ª to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday, 2nd April next. [No. 33.]

THE NAVY.

Earl CAWDOR rose to call attention to the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty explanatory of the Navy Estimates; and to move for Papers. The noble Earl said: My Lords, I do not think that any apology is necessary to your Lordships for calling attention this afternoon to the very important matters which are necessarily involved in the statements to which I refer. I shall deal first of all with a few points of minor importance—minor in so far as they do not overshadow in any way the greater issues we have to deal with later on, and important in themselves as showing the general progress of naval policy.

The noble Lord in his Statement tells us first of all with respect to the new system of entry and training of officers for the Navy that the scheme laid down a few years ago is answering its expectations, and, I understand, is considered to be generally very satisfactory. Your Lordships will note with some interest that recently the cadets who have passed through Osborne and Dartmouth have proceeded on a training cruise in the training cruisers allocated for that purpose. That cruise is to last six months, and I understand that some modification of the original scheme has now been sanctioned by the Board of Admiralty, under which these cadets after their six months training cruise will proceed further for five years by serving at sea before they can in any way specialise in the different classes of work they are desirous of taking up. That appears to me to be a very wise modification of the original scheme, and I hope your Lordships will understand that what was in the mind of Lord Selborne, who was responsible for this scheme, and in my own mind was that we must not be blindly tied to every detail of every scheme we may bring forward.

Every scheme may be liable to some changes, and in so far as the changes are wisely and carefully considered by the Board of Admiralty, they will always receive most careful consideration by the authors of the original scheme. There may be in the future difficulties to face with respect to this scheme, but I do not believe myself that they are likely to be in any way insuperable or beyond our powers of dealing with them. I think it will be a satisfaction to the country and to your Lordships—certainly it is a great satisfaction to the originators of this scheme, my distinguished predecessor Lord Selborne and the able Board associated with him—to find that whereas the present Board of Admiralty and the noble Lord wisely accepted the scheme provisionally in order to see how it worked, they have after careful consideration put their seal practically to the scheme as originally embodied. There are one or two changes that have taken place within the last year to which I wish to refer. One change is with reference to the supply of ammunition and guns. I understand it has been decided that in future the Admiralty will take their own responsibility with regard to the supply and issue of the guns. That appears to me to be a move absolutely in the right direction, and I trust that the fruits of it may be satisfactory.

Your Lordships will remember a most interesting debate upon some questions which arose out of a scheme of the London County Council as to their electric generating station in the neighbourhood of Greenwich Hospital. I am glad to hear that the difficulties which appeared likely to arise have been, in the view of the Board of Admiralty, successfully and satisfactorily overcome. I remember that interesting debate, and I do not think that any of your Lordships will easily forget two or three of the speeches that were then delivered.

One was from a noble Lord whose absence we all regret, and whose loss we all mourn—I mean Lord Kelvin. Another speech came from Lord Crawford, and both speeches, I am afraid, produced this result on me, that they taught me how very little I knew of the subjects which occupied the attention and exercised the brains of some of the ablest men in the country. These are things we remember with pleasure, and if the speeches of these noble Lords on that day did nothing but bring about the result which was subsequently arrived at, I am sure that their efforts were not made in vain.

We are told that the scourge of Malta fever, which had an unfortunate way of decimating the Fleet, and I assume also the troops at Malta, has practically disappeared. The fever appears to be put down to that unfortunate animal the goat. I do not know whether we are at liberty to ask, finding that the disease produced by the goats has disappeared, what has happened to the unfortunate goats, whether they are still thriving as they did at Malta in years past, or whether they have been eliminated with the disease.

There is an important question which I understand is still under discussion by the Board of Admiralty. It is the question of a better way of dealing with the coastguard. I understand from the noble Lord's statement that there has been an inter-Departmental Conference on this subject, which was a necessary preliminary to dealing with the subject on any broad lines. I understand that the Conference has reported to the Board of Admiralty and, I suppose, to the other Departments interested, and that the subject is still under consideration. I do not know whether the noble Lord can lay any Papers on the Table of the House with respect to that Conference, or whether he will as soon as he can inform Parliament exactly what is taking place with respect to that very important subject. Your Lordships should be informed at the earliest possible date.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord TWEEDMOUTH): I will make a statement on the subject this evening.

EARL CAWDOR: It is a subject which has created a great deal of interest and feeling throughout the country. Though it is very difficult to trace definitely to the coastguard anything definite in the way of value as a recruiting agent, yet we should not forget that undoubtedly the coastguard is scattered all round our coasts and that it presents an object lesson to the public as to what it is the Navy leads to. The public see the coastguard as a respectable and respected class, living comfortably for the most part on what amounts to their retired pay, in comfortable, clean cottages, with respectable families, and themselves an object of respect and regard in the district. I do not say that you can absolutely prove from that its strength as a recruiting body, but it is a naval element present to the minds of the people, and shows them what the men in the Navy may grow into.

I come now to a question on which there appears to be some ambiguity, some difficulty in comprehending the details. It is the subject of redundant stores. A large quantity of these stores has been used up during the last four years. The sums varied from £700,000 to £1,000,000 and £1,250,000. I understand this year the proposal is to absorb the remaining £500,000, which will wipe out the whole of the redundant stores, and compel the Government, I think, to raise £700,000 besides. I am not clear exactly how these redundant stores arose, whether from dockyard reforms, the closing down of foreign dockyards, and the redistribution of the Fleet; but I ask the noble Lord to give us either figures or Papers to clear the subject up.

There is another figure which, I think, puzzles "the man in the street" like myself. We find that the total amounts for the purchase of stores have diminished by something like £1,000,000 a year. At the same time we find that, whereas in former years the practice was to issue less than you purchased, during the last few years the practice has been to issue more than you purchased. I am told with respect to the drop in the figure from £3,500,000 to £2,500,000, roughly, that it has been accounted for chiefly by the change in the form of keeping the accounts in recent years; but no doubt the noble Lord will be able to tell us as to the change which took place when I held office and during his own tenure at the Board of Admiralty. It has been stated also—and the statement has not been contradicted—that there has been an annual reduction in the last few years in the amount of stores, as far as ammunition is concerned, of 40 per cent., 47 per cent. in torpedoes, and 37¾ per cent. for guns. I should like to know the explanation of that. I have no doubt there is a satisfactory explanation; and if the noble Lord can give it to us we shall be very much obliged.

The next subject is Rosyth. We hear a great deal of the line that is and must be drawn between battleships and large armoured cruisers before the date of the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" and those that come after. They are, of course, ships of a much larger size than those that came before; they are to form the fighting fleet of the British Navy, standing in the forefront of battle, and naturally the public turns with some anxiety to know how and where these vessels are to be docked in case of need. I must tender my grateful thanks to the noble Lord for placing within the precincts of the House a block plan of Rosyth Harbour. In examining that plan I notice certain pencil marks of works not apparently at once to be carried out, but apparently part of the general scheme. I think there has been a general idea among some people that Rosyth is only for taking one "Dreadnought" or two. Could the noble Lord tell us briefly, not alone what is proposed to be done now—I mean in the next ten years—but what can be done under the present plan in the way of developing and adding further docks; and, if so, at what approximate cost?

It is almost incomprehensible that we should be willing to sit down under the idea that Rosyth, practically the only dock we are to have on the East Coast north of Chatham, is not to be completed for ten years. I suggest that more money might be taken even this year for the commencement of this great work. Connected with this subject is the question of loans. Loans are liable to abuse, but there are many large works which you will never carry to successful completion unless you face the question of loans and without the aid of some system of loans. In many great undertakings, commercial and otherwise, it is a very common plan to ask for tenders, not alone based on the actual cost, but based also on the time within which the works can be carried out. Will the noble Lord consider whether it might not be worth while to endeavour to tempt contractors to suggest prices at which they could carry out the work within a more limited time than ten years, and whether it would not be worth while to pay some considerable sum more in order to give us the accommodation at an earlier date?

I turn to the Home Fleet, and I propose to deal for the moment with that part of that fleet which I will describe as the nucleus crew ships. I believe that the nucleus crew system is one of very great value. It has given us a very effective Reserve. But if the country is to have real confidence in the nucleus crew system, I beg the noble Lord and his colleagues at the Admiralty not to put upon it more than it really can bear. Do not profess that it is doing one iota more than it is doing. Now I understand that under the nucleus crew system in the Home Fleet, ships are in the habit of coming home from abroad for the purpose of repair. These ships when they come home, being in commission, must be attached to another fleet, and, therefore, they are attached to the Home Fleet. I understand further that some of these ships do not retain upon them any nucleus crew at all while they are undergoing repair. In that case, they pass over to the dockyard authorities and do not appear as part of the efficient Home Fleet.

Sometimes it is found better that these ships should retain during repair, which might extend possibly to six months, a certain nucleus crew on board. In that case they are still ships in commission, therefore ships that must be attached to some fleet, therefore attached to the Home Fleet. If that is the arrangement, I say that these ships have no business to be classified as ships of the Home Fleet efficient

Reserve. They are nothing of the kind. That is why I ask the noble Lord not to put on the nucleus crew system that which it is not absolutely bearing at a given time. It is perfectly simple. In the Navy List and Parliamentary Returns there should be placed, in brackets or otherwise, a clear statement that such ships are ships under repair. The public will then know exactly what they are, and will not think they have more ships in reserve ready for sea than they really have.

The Fleet at the Nore has as one of its component parts six battleships. That Fleet, I understand, went to sea for fleet exercise under the Commander-in-Chief on 9th March. I understand that of the six battleships the "Dreadnought," "Bulwark," and "Majestic" went to sea for the exercises, and, on the other hand, that the battleships "London," "Magnificent," and "Victorious" remained at Chatham. I should like to know the reason of these vessels not taking part in the fleet exercises. I should like to know, also, whether it is true that, while these three battleships were left at Chatham, the battleship "Cæsar" was brought round from Devonport and went to sea with the Nore Fleet in order to make up the tactical unit for battleship exercises. If that is so, the noble Lord would relieve the feelings of the public if he would say how it is that three battleships, supposed to be ready for sea and battle at any moment, should have been left behind.

So far I have dealt only with details. I must now come to a matter of the very gravest importance—our position in relation to the two-Power standard. I think the mind of the public some little time ago was not unreasonably disturbed by various statements made by Ministers in high office with respect to the two-Power standard. First of all, the Prime Minister—and no one can mention the name of the Prime Minister at this moment without expressing the deep regret which all classes in this country feel at his serious indisposition and his being unable to take part in public life—used words which were thought to throw a distinct slur on the idea of the two-Power standard, because as far as I remember, he said he could not admit that, under all circumstances, we should be obliged to maintain that standard. I recognise at once that the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty has never taken that line. He has assured your Lordships' House that in his view the two-Power standard must be maintained, and I think he added "at all costs."

Then there was another Minister who in quite recent times has also, I think, thrown a certain doubt upon our position with respect to the two-Power standard —I refer to the Secretary of State for War. Mr. Haldane, in the course of one of those many speeches he made in the autumn on the merits of his great Territorial Scheme—a scheme which we all hope will succeed and which we shall all endeavour to make succeed—speaking on behalf of this child of his, Mr. Haldane took the opportunity to point out that the population of this country is far less than that of some foreign countries, and said he conceived it might be very difficult for us, with our small population, to maintain the two-Power standard against the enormous populations of other countries. And then he proceeded to the extraordinary statement that if that state of things should come about, our not being able to maintain the supremacy of the sea, we should then have to rely, not on the Navy, but on what? On the Territorial Force. God help the country then! That is really a trivial thing to suggest. Is it not a trifling thing to suggest that we should ever come to anticipate for a moment that we should not hold the supremacy of the sea?

Shortly after that speech Sir Edward Grey made a speech, and, in that language which he uses so effectively and so well, he said that, though the command of the sea might be desirable to other countries, it is absolutely essential to our existence, and, he added—

> "The loss of the supremacy of the sea would mean to this country, not alone defeat but conquest."

My Lords, that is the dominating feeling, the dominating reason why the people of this country will always hold to the view that, come what will, we must have unassailable superiority at sea. I only quote these few sentences to show that, while certain members of the Government have supported, and strongly supported, the two-Power standard, and have never ventured to anticipate the possibility of the loss of the command of the sea, there have been ominous words used here and there which have given the country cause for reflection and serious complaint.

There is one other point which has arisen mainly with regard to the same matter on which I will say one word, and which, I think, has also given rise to considerable uneasiness in the minds of those who study naval matters. There was a debate the other day in another place, on the reduction of armaments, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved an Amendment to the Resolution brought forward pledging the House to support His Majesty's Ministers in such economies in naval and military expenditure "as are consistent with the adequate defence of his Majesty's Dominions." It was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition that after the word "consistent" there should be inserted, "with the two-Power standard of naval strength." That would have made it clear what was in the minds of the Government and the majority in another place; but for some reason or other, which I cannot explain, that Amendment was rejected and the Government declined to have any mention made of the two-Power standard. That seemed to me a serious matter, and it made me wonder what was in the minds of the Government with regard to the two-Power standard. It may have been done merely for the purpose of getting over a political difficulty. I trust that was so, and I pass on to deal with one or two other statements made with regard to this all-important subject, the two-Power standard.

But before I do that, may I endeavour to disentangle it from another subject? There are the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" classes, which are practically a separate and distinct branch of the Navy at the present day, and we must be careful that any statements made with regard to them are not to be taken as dealing at the same time with the question of the two-Power standard. The "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" type is a matter of enormous importance. I ventured to say a year or two ago that the nation which possessed the most "Dreadnoughts" and "Invincibles" would be the nation that would rule the sea in the future. I believe that is true to-day; but in dealing in another place with the particular question of how far it was or was not the case that the German Navy were rapidly overhauling us with respect to these particular classes of vessels, it was practically admitted by the Secretary to the Admiralty that, if the programme of the German Government was carried out, by the autumn of 1911 it might be the case practically that they would not only have overtaken, but possibly have passed us—that there might be then thirteen German ships of these types and only twelve of ours. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, gave an absolute and distinct pledge that if in respect of these particular classes of vessels it was found that the German programme was being carried out and was kept up to date, not only should other vessels be laid down, but those already laid down should be put forward for completion in order that in the autumn of 1911 it would be impossible that we should be only equal with or in a minority to the German Navy in respect of these vessels. That is an enormously important announcement, and it was made by the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, intentionally and recognising its gravity. It lays a heavy burden on the years 1910 and 1911, but the Government have undertaken to bear it. They recognise it, and they do not flinch.

Now I come to the general two-Power standard, including all battleships that are up-to-date. The life of a battleship now generally accepted is some twenty years. That is accepted in Germany. I do not know whether the noble Lord opposite goes so far. I think we take it in this country at twenty-five years, and, including all ships of that age, we want to be assured that, with regard to any other two Powers in the world, we have what has been described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as unassailable supremacy at sea. The Chancellor of the Exchequer practically adopted this two-Power standard, and said there was no difference of opinion with regard to it. I hope and believe that is so, but, in order to make our position perfectly clear, I think I may say that we consider that our position must always be, taking the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of unassailable superiority, and I add to that, unassailable superiority over the two most powerful navies to whatever countries they may belong. I should be glad if the noble Lord will tell me if he accepts that definition of the two-Power standard, or if there is any modification to be made in it. I hope he will make that clear to the House and the country to-night.

I ask that for this reason, you cannot leave your two-Power standard superiority to be gathered up when it is needed. You must take your stand on the firm rock of being always ahead of and always supreme against the two greatest navies of the world. You can break up the comity of nations, you can create a war in five minutes, but how long does it take you to build a battleship? If you wish to maintain European peace let every country know that the people of this country always intend the two-Power standard as I have described it to-night.

But, my Lords, there has been for some reason, which, perhaps, I had better not try to describe, a regular pushing back of the programme of new construction from this year on to future years. I take your battleship programme. You have practically taken but a flea-bite of it this year. You will have spent not 10 per cent. by the end of this financial year. You are pushing back practically almost the whole of your battleship and "Invincible" programme of this year. You have also the pledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that if need be, he is prepared to face having to meet the German programme, if that programme is carried out within its time, so as to place us in a safe position as regards these large modern vessels, such as the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible," by the autumn of 1911. He has pledged himself to push forward, if necessary, the dates at which those vessels are laid down, in order that they may be finished by that time. What does that mean? You may require in the next financial year and the year after it, not alone to lay down, but to complete no fewer than four battleships. That would amount to eight battleships. I put them at £1,800,000 apiece. Therefore you have this undertaking of the Government that they will, if necessary, face an expenditure under that head of possibly not less than £14,000,000 or £14,500,000 in two years. I note this because it is so easy to talk airily of economy and raise a passing cheer by cutting down expenditure. But posterity has to bear the cost of what you are doing. I put down roughly the figures for eight battleships. But that is merely what may be necessary to keep our supremacy at the end of 1911. It takes no account of what you may be obliged to lay down in 1910–1911 for future requirements.

I will not say very much about cruisers, except that, in so far as the policy prevails of building and laying down cruisers of the "Invincible" class, so surely will those ships become less and less of value or available for the purpose of being the eyes of the Fleet. "Invincibles" are to stand in the battle line against the battleships of other countries; they are practically battleships. Therefore, for the eyes of your Fleet you have to watch the provision of other vessels. I understand that the Admiralty propose this year to lay down six cruisers not of the first-class type. They are described roughly as "Boadiceas." One of these is, I believe, to be laid down in the dockyard at Pembroke, and £190,000 is taken to be expended in this year's Estimates. With regard to the other five which are to be built in private yards only a miserable sum of £6,700 per ship is taken. I believe the cost of the "Boadicea" will be about £400,000. I do not know what the other five vessels are to be, but certainly not less than that. Accordingly the Government are leaving a goodly heritage of cost to the next financial year. I do not know what the sum may be, but it cannot be less than £3,000,000.

I come to destroyers. The Government propose this year to lay down sixteen destroyers. I understand they will cost about £80,000 apiece, so that their total cost will be something over £1,250,000. The Government are only taking this year a sum of £4,000 for each of these vessels — a total of £64,000 out of £1,280,000, leaving for future years no less a sum than £1,200,000. With respect to destroyers, I pass to a story which fills me with concern and alarm. I have taken the Dilke Return for 1907 and the Navy Estimates of this year in so far as they in any way modify that Return. I have also taken it that the best part of the life of a destroyer is limited to eleven years. The figures I must now give would appear to me incredible if I had not got them from official documents. We have shown in the Dilke Return destroyers launched in 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897. In none of those years had either France or Germany launched any such vessels. But if the figures are worked out the position comes about to this. I am taking only vessels of eleven years old or less, and I find that in the year 1903 we had in this country, according to the Dilke Return of 1907, 123 destroyers. France had at that time 29, Germany had 32; together these two countries had 61. In 1904 France had 31, Germany had 38; combined the two countries had 69, and we had 127. In 1905 France had 33, Germany had 43—together 76—and we had 121. I leave out 1906 as being unimportant, though the drop was almost as great. In 1907, while France had 65 and Germany had 85—together 150—our force of destroyers of eleven years old and less had dropped to 93.

That is a very grave statement to make. I make it from the Dilke Return of 1907. I have made two alterations in that Return. I add to our Fleet the destroyers for 1907—five vessels more than appeared in the Dilke Return—because they appeared in the Estimates of this year as having been since put into commission. I also add to the German destroyers for this year twelve vessels, which I understand have been added to their fleet since that time. I am not very particular about those twelve vessels; what I call attention to as meriting the gravest possible concern and attention is that, whereas in 1903 we had 123 destroyers, against a united destroyer fleet of Germany and France numbering 61, we have to-day only 93 destroyers, against a combined fleet of Germany and France numbering 150 destroyers. That is a grave indictment, but I am afraid my figures are practically correct. If the noble Lord can show that they are absolutely incorrect, that we are in a perfectly satisfactory position in regard to destroyers, no one will rejoice more than I. I beg the noble Lord to give us a clear and definite statement of the position if these figures are wrong. It will not be an answer to say the figures are not right, unless he gives the official and correct figures.

I may be told that we have plenty of coastal destroyers. Coastal destroyers do not appear in the Dilke Return as destroyers at all. Coastal destroyers have been deliberately and intentionally placed by the Admiralty in the category of torpedo-boats. Therefore I do not think we can very well be told that these vessels are going to be taken out of that category and put into the category of destroyers. If so, I should like to know what their capacity to coal is, and how long they can stay at sea. In France alone in 1907 they increased the fleet of destroyers from 34 to 65; in Germany in the same year they increased the fleet of destroyers from 47 to 85. We have, in the meantime, allowed our fleet of destroyers to go down to 93. I may be told that I am wrong in taking eleven years as the period of effective service for a destroyer, and that twelve or fourteen years may be allowed, but it will require a good deal of persuasion to take me away from eleven years, the period provided in the Estimates in regard to depreciation. I may be told that many are quite efficient. Now, there are 59 of these vessels that go back from 1897 to 1893, and if we are told that they are quite capable for service, that they are quite fit for sea, and that they can do excellent service, then I ask will the First Lord tell us what service they have done in the past six months? Will he pick out of these 93 those that have done service? There are 25 built in 1895, 14 in 1894, and 16 in 1896. I should like to have a Return showing what the practice of these vessels has been, how frequently they have been to sea, how long they have been at sea, and to what extent they are in good repair. Apart from the inefficiency of torpedo-boats and destroyers, I would press this. Surely it is the fact that if you are to have efficient officers on these vessels they must be continually at sea. The speed of the vessels, the work required, call for the exercise of the utmost skill and nerve, and if you keep young officers on shore week after week and month after month, you will destroy their self-confidence and nerve and they will not show capacity when it is required.

I have not the least doubt that my finance is liable to criticism, but even if it is and to the extent of millions, the outlook in the coming years is grave enough. I ask the noble Lord, is it not within the mark to say that with the possibilities the Government have admitted, having to push forward the date for laying down vessels, would it not be fair to say that the calculation with reference to what will be required in 1911–1912, lands us in a prospective charge for new construction of something like £20,000,000 in two years?

I have detained your Lordships at great length, but so many are the subjects dealt with in this statement that it would be difficult to touch upon them all without occupying a very long time. What I would press upon your Lordships, upon the Government, and upon the country is this. For the sake of a temporary—may I without offence call it a political—economy you are laying a burden on posterity which it will be very difficult to bear. And I wish to call attention to this. This is not an accidental charge; it is not unlooked for; this outcome of the economies the Government are developing they have had their eyes open to. The Estimates were shaved down, first, by the pressure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, secondly, by the pressure of debate, until we see this present condition and example of bad economy, which piles up burdens for the future. I may be told the Estimates were untouched as a result of the debate on armaments; but I notice that in another place the Secretary to the Admiralty was challenged; he was asked if the Estimates had been altered not alone by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—we are all accustomed to his pruning hand—but also after notice was given of the Motion for reduction of armaments, and he was silent; he made no reply. We are at liberty, then, I think, to assume that, in addition to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's there was some other influence responsible for cutting down the Navy Estimates this year.

One word in conclusion. I have always striven—your Lordships will support that assertion in relation to my speaking in this House, and those who have heard me will do the same in reference to my speeches elsewhere—I have always striven to keep the Navy apart from party politics. I will keep it apart from political party pressure as far as I can; the issues are far too grave, far too serious to be mixed up with party contentions; they are matters upon which the safety, the security of the country rests. But if there is a duty of silence, the duty of endeavouring not to embarrass those in authority that duty we have carried out; we, those with whom I am connected in this House and elsewhere, have done this, so far as it is possible. I have been blamed for not speaking in harsher terms; but I would rather err in that direction than allow for a moment party or political considerations to come into the matter at all. But if that is a burden of responsibility cast upon us, and I accept it, there is another equally grave, equally clear duty incumbent on the Opposition if we find in the Estimates that which is not consistent with the interests of the country. Bound as we are not to mix the interests of the Navy with party politics, in the interest of the country we are bound to speak out fully, clearly, with no doubting, hesitating voice, if we find anything proposed which endangers the safety and prosperity of this great Empire. It is with this sense of responsibility I speak to-night, and beg the House to believe that I have said what I have said in no party spirit whatever, and I trust most sincerely that the noble Lord will give a satisfactory answer on all the points I have thought it my duty to raise.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House further Papers relating to the Navy Estimates."—(*Earl Cawdor.*)

LORD ELLENBOROUGH: My Lords, a study of the Naval Estimates, of the explanatory Memorandum of the First Lord, and of that part of the Press which devotes itself to naval matters, leads me to believe that these Estimates are the lowest that the naval members of the Board would agree to without resignation. Whether this hypothesis is correct or not will probably not be known for some years, but in the meantime I shall criticise the Naval Estimates from that point of view.

I begin by saying that I am in favour of the greater part of the reforms that have recently been introduced in the Navy. I agree with what is stated in page 5 of the First Lord's Memorandum about the nucleus crew system. It keeps the ships in better order than they used to be. I am also aware that when mobilised they were very rapidly manned, but I think that it would have taken some days for the mobilised ships to have completed with stores, ammunition, and coal, if orders had been issued for the whole of them to be sent to sea. For instance, at Keyham, one or two ships might have been got ready in a short time, but the simultaneous embarkation of stores, coal and ammunition for all of them, would have resulted in hopeless confusion, owing to the unfinished state of the pavement and of the approaches to the docks. I hope that there will be no further delay in completing them. We have spent millions on the Plymouth docks, and we ought at once to disburse the few thousand pounds necessary to enable us to make full use of them.

I was at Dartmouth in December, and was favourably impressed with the manner in which the cadets are being taught, and I firmly believe that the new system of training and amalgamation will be successful. Those who attack it ought to go to Osborne and Dartmouth, and judge for themselves, before rushing into print. Its opponents appear to forget that up-to-date executive officers ought certainly to be engineers in all that concerns guns, torpedoes, and electricity, and that an engineer lieutenant is only to be specialised for the larger engines used in propulsion. In fact, I think that some such term as "propulsion lieutenant" might be substituted for that of engineer lieutenant, as it would give a clearer idea of that officer's duties.

As regards the Hague Conference, I shall not say much about it now, because I believe it is likely to be the subject of a debate in this House before very long. In the next war no belligerent is at all likely to accept all the conclusions of the Hague or of any other Conference. They will make important exceptions favourable to themselves. Nor am I a believer in the impartiality of neutrals when sitting on an International Prize Court. Could we have expected just decisions from Dutch or Belgian judges during the Boer war? I hope, therefore, that the Prize Court of Appeal Convention will end in smoke.

I regret that I cannot find in the Naval Estimates or in the First Lord's Memorandum a single sentence from which one might infer that we might have to remove mechanical mines in time of war. It is true that we have destroyers to sink the vessels employed in laying them down, but how about removing them when laid? At the Hague Conference Germany claimed the right of using floating contact mines in case of necessity. We have thus received fair warning that we must be prepared to deal with thousands of mines on the North Sea and on any part of our coasts where Germany is able to strew them. Personally, I hate mechanical mines; they are a danger to friend and foe, to belligerents as well as to neutrals. I regret that it was possible to invent them. But there is no use in adopting the policy of the ostrich in dealing with them. I think, however, that we should feel very grateful to Germany for her honesty in opposing definite limitations to their use instead of agreeing to resolutions which might have lulled us to sleep. Depend upon it that the first use that any future Van Trômp would make of his broom would be to brush away any of the fine spun cobwebs of the Hague Conference, or of so-called International Law, which might interfere with the more difficult work of sweeping up the British Fleet.

I have seen in some of the papers that neutral countries would interfere and prevent Germany from laying down mines. What neutrals? Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France are the countries whose commerce would be chiefly interfered with. But France would have the Atlantic and Mediterranean still open to her. As for the three smaller countries, if their remonstrances were serious they would probably find themselves part of the German Empire before the conclusion of the war. Our Admiralty will be exceedingly remiss if it does not take steps to deal with this danger by a well-organised system of coast defence. Now it would be folly to employ large and expensive ships on such a duty as sweeping and looking for mines. Small and cheap vessels, old ones for choice, should be employed on this work. As we shall have but few officers and men available from the Regular Service, we must trust this duty to the officers and men of the mercantile marine, and the Royal Naval Reserve. It is one to which they will not be found unequal if they are given a little training before war begins. Constant vigilance will be necessary, and fleets of coasting vessels fitted with the necessary apparatus, manned by Royal Naval Reserve men and officers will be most suitable for that purpose. Royal Naval Reserve officers should receive special instructions in the best known methods of dealing expeditiously with mechanical mines, not only on paper in the lecture room, but also at sea in vessels specially equipped for that purpose.

As regards the distribution of our Fleet, in February last year all our war fleets were at Lagos, and our Eastern coasts were open to attack and possible invasion. Again last Christmas the ships, companies in all our harbours were on leave in watches at the same time, and most of our admirals as well. I think that it would have been better to give leave to all the men in one fleet at one time, and to keep the men of the other fleets within the limits of the port where their ships were, until it came to their turn to go on long leave. I have, however, no wish to see the total amount of leave given in one year curtailed. If, however, the Admiralty had reliable information as to the exact state and condition of foreign fleets at those particular times such proceedings may have been justified, but great caution should always be exercised. We have been told to sleep quietly in our beds, but I confess that I should not do so unless I believed that the Admiralty kept a sharper look-out than it professes to do.

Those who hold my views have been called "scaremongers," "blue-funkers," and disciples of the black treachery school. If any words of mine cause any additional precautions to be taken against surprise, those who wish for reduced Estimates may call me all the names to be found in a slang dictionary. I joined the Navy in 1854, and have been in Texas, and have therefore a very strong vocabulary at my disposal if I thought that anything was to be gained by making use of it. The terms "scaremonger" and "blue-funker" are no more applicable to those who think precautions necessary against surprise, than they are to captains of mail-steamers who go slow, sound steam whistles, and double the number of their lookout men when going down Channel in a fog. Invasion is a danger that is far more imminent now than it was a few years ago, for railways and telegraphs had not been developed to their present extent; it has now become one that the present and future Admiralties must guard against.

If large numbers of ships require repairs after intermittent manœuvres, how much more would this be the case during a continuous war. Ask the Admirals of our seagoing fleets how many battleships they would require to have under their orders to ensure a permanency of twenty battleships near an enemy's coast. I do not think that any of them would put it at less than thirty. The whole of a blockading fleet has never been able to remain permanently on its station. A century-and-a-half ago Admiral Hawke said that he required to have twenty-four line-of-battle ships under his orders if he was to keep nineteen or twenty perpetually off Brest. He generally had two re-fitting at Portsmouth, and two provisioning at Tor Bay or at Cawsand Bay. Nelson, too, was unable to keep the whole of the fleet under his command constantly off Cadiz. When Trafalgar was fought, five of his thirty-two battleships were at Gibraltar. He had to send the "Royal Sovereign" home instead of taking her with him when he followed Villeneuve across the Atlantic. At present, in these days of steamers and more frequent refits, thirty ships would be required if twenty of them are to be constantly ready near an enemy's coast in the North Sea. This is one of the unfortunate conditions of warfare that is imposed on the Power that must always be in command of the sea. As long as we have so small an army, we cannot afford to lose that command for forty-eight hours.

At present, if we were at war with both Germany and Japan we should be unable to protect both Australia and England from invasion. As neither nation trains its manhood to arms, one or the other would have to succumb. Even while at peace with Germany we could not keep more than one-fourth or one-sixth of our naval forces on a distant station, even if our Navy was double that of the German Empire. What I say about numbers equally effects all classes of vessels. Battleships, like the knights of old, require trusty squires in the shape of torpedo vessels to despatch their disabled adversaries, and to protect them from night attack.

I do not intend to weary the House with lists and comparisons of ships built or building in this country and abroad. I shall, however, ask your Lordships to consider the following figures. According to statements made by the Government in another place, we are this year going to spend £11,250,000, and Germany intends to spend £9,500,000 on shipbuilding, repairs, and armaments. Now, no British Admiralty, however efficient, can get twice as much value from £11,000,000 as Germany can get from £9,000,000. We have only to continue our present policy for a year or two longer and the command of the North Sea will pass to Germany without a struggle on our part. Then, if we displease Germany she will starve us. There will be no question of a big or a little loaf, there will be no loaf at all. Whether in war or peace, if we lose command of the narrow seas, this country will be reduced to a position of a dog standing on its hind legs and begging for any crumbs that other nations may permit it to receive. Is the proud Anglo-Saxon race prepared to accept that position or is it not? What is the use of Education Bills to train a race that will have to submit to such indignity and suffering if it does not speedily mend its ways? What is the use of Licensing Bills if all the money we expect to save on beer may not be able to buy us bread?

Last week a former Prime Minister appealed to the Press of both countries to avoid producing irritating articles causing mutual suspicion. That mutual suspicion will, however, continue as long as the immediate future of Great Britain remains insecure. It was greatly increased by the departure from the Cawdor programme, which raised hopes in German bosoms which I trust will never be fulfilled. But it is not in ships alone that we must be prepared. Even if we build several "Dreadnoughts," by the time they are completed we should be unable to dock them when damaged. The only dock that we have on the East Coast could not dock a damaged ship. The only limit to the number of men and machines that ought to be at work at Rosyth is the number that can be employed without overcrowding. We have wasted four years in talk about Rosyth which ought to have been spent in work. Rosyth is to be ready in ten years. By that time fresh chapters may have been written in the history of Europe. The present programme ought to be complete in less than five. The new lock at Portsmouth ought to be hurried on as well.

The effect of a partial blockade of these islands has never been brought home to the people. Talk of old-age pensions, indeed. In the struggle for life that will ensue if our islands are blockaded by either ships or mines, when the horrors of famine are upon us, when our population is being reduced to the number that our islands can feed without assistance from abroad, the weakest will go to the wall, and there will be no old people left to draw pensions. Those who want to reduce the Navy should read the histories of sieges in bygone times, if they wish to have an idea of what sufferings they may have to undergo before death kindly puts an end to them. The accounts of the starvation of England will surpass in their horrors all that have hitherto been recorded by historians. Four days command of the sea would enable a foreigner to invade this country with forces that we should be unable to withstand. If he did not invade, but remained in command of the seas for four weeks, we should then have commenced to starve, and in four months we should have starved and fought one another for food in such a manner as to effect a considerable reduction of our population. The rich would starve as well as the poor. Motor-cars and "old masters" would be exchanged for loaves of bread. Race-horses would be eaten. Those suspected of hoarding food would be plundered and murdered, and their houses would be burnt over their heads by their starving fellow-countrymen.

The German newspapers met the reduction in our Naval Estimates in 1906 with derisive shouts of enjoyment at the sight of England putting her "hands up" to Germany at the first sign of the commencement of the financial struggle for the command of the North Sea. For whether we like it or not, the financial struggle has commenced and will continue for some years to come. Whether this country will arouse itself to the dangers of its position, and meet the impending crisis with the energy and dignity that it showed a century ago, when confronted by similar dangers, remain to be seen. Germany may get tired of wasting her money on unprofitable ambitions before Great Britain surrenders the means of ensuring her food supply, before we put it into the power of another country to dictate to us how much we should be allowed to export and to import, and under what conditions our trade and manufactures are to be carried on.

Germany has flung down the gauntlet for a financial struggle, and that gauntlet must be taken up whether we like it or not, if we wish to avoid starvation, serfdom, and national annihilation. We hear a great deal about the unemployed and about the evils connected with working overtime. Why are numbers of men connected with shipbuilding to be idle in 1908, and then given high wages for overtime in 1910? This is a strange policy for a Government that claims to be economical and to be a friend of the working man. The ships whose building we postpone will cost us a great deal more money in consequence of our delay. If ships are to be well and cheaply built, their construction should be as continuous as possible. The departure from the Cawdor programme was the gravest financial mistake that a Government could possibly commit. We are relying too much on our assumed power of building more rapidly than other countries. Six of the principal private yards in Germany have declared that between them they could turn out a total of fifteen battleships in a year if they could only get the orders. According to the newspaper Admiral Tirpitz has at one time said that the Germans could build as fast as the English, and has latterly asserted the contrary. I can see no reason why they should not be able to build as fast as we can. They have our "Dreadnought" experience to go upon.

There is an old fable called "The Hare and the Tortoise." There is also an old German saying, "Ohne hast, ohne rast." In 1855 I saw the only German man-of-war of the time, an old wooden frigate, lying at anchor in Plymouth Sound. She had formerly figured on our Navy List as the "Thetis." In the sixties I was a shipmate of German military officers who had been sent on board our men-of-war to learn seamanship and gunnery, so as to be able to lay the foundations of a German Navy. We were excellent friends, and I have every reason to believe that they enjoyed their two years stay on board our ships. From these small beginnings a steadfast and unswerving policy has built up a formidable fleet. Now that the German tortoise has crept half-way over the course, the British hare is recommended to go to sleep on its form, and to let the tortoise win. I hope, however, that Great Britain will wake up, that it will insist upon Supplementary Estimates before it is too late, upon a larger building programme, upon an earlier completion of Rosyth, and upon a coastal scheme for removing mechanical mines.

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: My Lords, the question I have to put to the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, and of which I have given him private notice, is with regard to the coastguard as connected with the lifeboat service. I wish to ask whether the coastguard is to be further reduced or abolished. The noble Lord, I know, takes as great an interest in the lifeboat service as I do, and I feel that the efficiency of that service will be much impaired by any great reduction of the coastguard. The secretaries and coxswains of lifeboats have gained quite half their information connected with wrecks and casualties along the coast from the coastguard. Then there is the rocket apparatus and 331 life-saving stations under the care of the coastguard. The number of lives saved by this means in 1906–7 was 268, an increase of 127 as compared with the total of the previous year. Then, again, there is the protection of derelict and wrecked cargoes against wreckers and a longshoreman. These are questions which, I hope, the noble Lord has well considered. It is only a short time ago that the coastguard was considered about the best organised body in His Majesty's service, by which, in case of emergency, from twelve to fourteen battleships could be ready for sea and for service in forty-eight hours.

*LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, my noble friend Lord Cawdor stated, quite accurately, that there are many points in the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty which might be touched upon. There are two, in particular, to which I should like to draw his attention. We have a very large naval force stationed round these islands, and in 1905 public attention was very much drawn to this force by a process of re-classifying or re-labelling them rather than by any material addition made to our strength in home waters. These different fleets would, in time of war, be brought together under one command, and if the combined fleets are to be ready in time of war to act as one united whole it is most important that in time of peace the Navy should have sufficient practice in combined fleet action. It is essential that the Commander-in-chief should have had sufficient practice of this kind so that the ships may be utilised in warfare to the best possible advantage.

For a commander-in-chief to be able fully to control the movements of a line extending seven or eight miles, as would be the case if these three fleets—the Atlantic, the Nore, and the Channel—were brought together, a great amount of previous practice is necessary, for it is impossible to suppose that movements can be carried out with celerity and method unless those in command have been habituated to those exercises. Not only is this true of the commander-in-chief, but also of the flag commanders under him. The four days devoted to such combined manœuvres last year were wholly insufficient; the fleets were brought together for twenty days, but four days only were devoted to combined fleet action. I should like to ask the noble Lord why these fleets are not brought together for a longer period for combined manœuvring. That is what Germany, with her constantly increasing fleet, is doing. Everything should be done to relieve the Commander-in-Chief of paper and routine work. Instead of different fleets being, as a rule, dispersed, they should be, as a rule, combined.

The other point on which I desire to ask a Question is that of the submarines. I believe that, so far, certainly during last year, they have not taken part in any of the naval manœuvres; and in view of the expenditure of £500,000 upon new construction of submarines, and also the fact that vessels of larger size are going to be built, I should like to ask whether it has been thought out and considered how submarines are going to be utilised in attack, and also whether there is any scheme by which an attack of submarines is to be repelled. When torpedoes were first introduced great stress was laid upon their importance and vast sums of money were spent upon them. Subsequent events, particularly in the Japanese war, proves that the use of torpedoes had been very much exaggerated and magnified; and before we embark on this heavy expenditure as regards submarines we want an assurance that it has been fully considered how they are to be utilised, and also whether there has been any carefully thought out scheme of defence against submarine attack.

LORD INVERCLYDE: My Lords, I do not take part in this discussion as in any way criticising the Admiralty, but I wish to put before the First Lord the views of one engaged in commerce and deeply interested in the mercantile marine. It is absolutely necessary that our fleets should be kept in a state of complete preparation for war; but, in making preparations for war, the functions of the Navy in time of peace are apt to be overlooked. Nowadays the great idea appears to be to have all His Majesty's ships in fleets. Previously we used to have single vessels of the Navy in all parts of the world. This country has been the pioneer in regard to maritime commerce, and it must frankly be admitted that in achieving our present proud position we have been largely indebted to the ships of His Majesty's Navy.

In former days these ships were in evidence in all parts of the world; but now there are many parts where the White Ensign is never seen. You hardly ever meet a British man-of-war now in Zanzibar; you are far more likely to meet a German. There is seldom a British man-of-war on the West Coast of Africa or at the Cape. One is very seldom seen in the West Indies or the Pacific; there you often come across American men-of-war. It is of the greatest advantage to our commercial interests that there should be British men-of-war in all parts of the world. I know that the answer is that in time of war these single vessels might be a source of danger. My reply to that is that in time of peace single vessels are a source of power to this country and immensely beneficial to our trade. What this country needs is a Navy sufficient to protect its interests, whether that is or is not in excess of the two-Power standard.

There is another point I desire to refer to—namely, the present policy of building as many ships of the Fleet as possible in dockyards and not giving work to private yards. The dockyards ought to be used for repair work, and the private yards for building. The private yards are among the greatest assets of the country, and much capital has been sunk in them to meet the requirements of the Admiralty. I assert that the vessels built in private yards are of better value than those built in the dockyards. Vessels built in the dockyard are constructed by Estimate; the desire is not to exceed the Estimate, and the owner of the dockyard and of the ship being one the inspection is not nearly so strict; and I believe it is well-known that when you come to sell obsolete men-of-war those built in private yards fetch the better price. The inspection of a vessel built in a private yard is exceedingly strict, naturally so; for it is the duty of the representatives of the Admiralty to get as much out of the private builder as they can for the money. I can speak from experience, for that is what we do ourselves.

The Admiralty have appointed retired admirals to look after the work in these yards and they discharge their duties most efficiently; but I venture to think it is a mistake that retired admirals should hold these appointments. I believe that if admirals on the active list went round these yards for three years or so and then returned to the Admiralty, the experience they gained would be of great advantage to the country. I regret very much that the Admiralty have not given greater encouragement to the Royal Naval Reserve. I quite appreciate the view of the Admiralty and the reasons why they do not do more, but, as far as we are concerned in the mercantile marine, we regard the Royal Naval Reserve as of the greatest benefit to us and to the country. I should like to ask if the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty has considered what, if the Eight Hours Bill for Miners is passed, will be the additional cost to the Admiralty of coal; and whether, if I sent him a petition against the Bill, he would authorise the Secretary to the Admiralty to sign it.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: My Lords, the noble Earl who has raised this debate to-day made a strong and somewhat aggressive speech on the subject of naval policy. He declared that he had done his best to keep clear of party attack. I must say that I do not think he succeeded very well in carrying out his purpose. For the noble Earl certainly put the worst complexion on the Government's statement of its policy, and attributed to us the very worst practices of finance. I rather protest against that line. I agree that the office which I have the honour to hold does remove a man very largely from the general political work of his Party. He must, in naval affairs, be entirely outside Party; and it would not be right for him to take an active part in party affairs That is a principle on which I have always endeavoured to act.

I do not think that the noble Earl has altogether remembered the heavy responsibility that he must have felt when he held my office. The responsibility that falls upon a First Lord is a very serious one. It is a double one. His primary responsibility is, of course, to maintain the Navy in supreme strength. It must also be his business to consider how far the burden of naval expense may fairly be borne by the people of this country. The charge this year on the taxpayers is no less than £32,319,500. No one will say that this is a small burden. It represents more than one-fifth, nearer one-fourth, of the total expenditure of the country. It involves, I think, something like 14s. 6d. per head of the whole population of 44,000,000 within these islands. No one can say that this is a light burden, and it seems to me that the only answer that can be made to those who protest against that heavy charge is to point out that the building of battleships, the great addition to naval establishments, dockyards, barracks, and so forth, are very expensive things; but, in comparison with the expense of maintaining the Navy, I say that if you estimate what is the cost of battles, it will be found that the cost of our naval establishments is small indeed.

I believe that our command of the sea is a necessity to this country, and that it is absolutely essential we should hold that command. Our position as a country is very different from that of other countries. Other countries have extended land frontiers by means of which, even in time of war, they can get supplies, if not in one quarter, then in another. Besides that, they have large resources in the way of being able to feed their own people from their own land. That is not our case. We have to bring everything from across the sea. We have to bring our food to our people across the sea; we have to bring our raw material for our manufactures across the sea; and we have to send our manufactures and other exports again across the sea. The great dominions of the King beyond the sea were gained by us through our power on the sea, and it is by the sea that we can defend both them and ourselves. I must not be thought weak in holding the opinion that the command of the sea is absolutely necessary for us.

I will first answer the various questions that the noble Lord has asked me, and then I will endeavour to meet the greater part of his speech by taking up the three great classes of work we have to do in the Admiralty—I mean, ships, establishments, and *personnel.* The first question which the noble Lord brought prominently before your Lordships was the question of the two-Power standard. I do not think the definition of what is the two-Power standard is altogether a question for the Admiralty. I think that we are the servants of the Government to carry out what definition they may make for us. On the two-Power standard I am perfectly sound. I must remind the House that both the Prime Minister, whose grave indisposition we are all deeply sorry for, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the one last year, and the other only last week—accepted in the most decided manner the two-Power standard. According to what is recorded in the Admiralty, I find that my predecessors have always taken the two-Power standard as meaning the two next strong Powers abroad plus ten per cent. I have rather a wider formula myself. I am here speaking for myself and not for my colleagues; but I much prefer this definition as to the standard—namely, any reasonably probable combination of other foreign Powers. I would much rather not point to any particular one or two Powers, but I would say this—every Government has to consider the whole of the conditions of our position towards foreign countries, and it is by that that the standard we have to keep up should be maintained and regulated.

There was a small question about the goats at Malta. The goats still live; but it was not the goats that spread the microbes, it was their milk; and the way in which we got rid of the Malta fever was by preventing the sailors and marines of the Fleet from using any of the goats' milk. As a matter of fact, the Malta goat lives in a very dirty manner; it feeds on filthy garbage; and consequently the animal is liable to get its milk much contaminated.

The noble Lord asked me a question about the redundant stores. It is true that both Lord Cawdor and I have used up the redundant stores. These stores are chiefly accounted for by the scrapping of the smaller ships which took place during the time of Lord Selborne and the closing of the colonial and foreign dockyards. There was an enormous accumulation of stores, and they were transferred to the establishments at home. This procedure was absolutely right and economical. It was right that they should be used up, because stores deteriorate or get out of date. There are, for instance, changes of fashion in cables and anchors and it was a proper course to take to use up these stores. As the noble Lord said, it is perfectly true that this operation has been going on for four years; it has amounted on an average to nearly £1,000,000 a year, and we have got the benefit of the last £500,000 for next year. In respect of future arrangements, it is found that owing to commercial improvements, we can get our stores very much more quickly than we used to do. It is quite evident that, provided our stores are sufficient for the purposes for which they are required, and that the amount we have makes us perfectly safe in case of emergency arising, it is not wise to keep more stores than we need. A fixed sum has been decided upon, and we shall make provision to keep a sufficient supply of stores for all purposes that may be required.

The noble Lord accurately stated the fact as to the altered arrangement for ordering naval guns and ordnance. The decision with regard to guns and ordnance is now in the hands of the Admiralty. Our guns and ammunition are different from those under the charge of the War Office, and it seems to me to be an extraordinary thing that we should have received all this ammunition and all these guns through the War Office. The year 1901 was the year when the expenditure on ammunition reached its high-water-mark. A considerable amount of ammunition was saved, as well as annual expenditure, by the abolition of 150 ships that were scrapped, and the old ammunition which was on board the scrapped ships has been since used for the purposes of practice. It has not been wasted, and its use has avoided the purchase to some extent of further ammunition. There was a reduction in the number of types of guns and in the different kinds of ammunition also. The annual Vote for ammunition supplies what is required for practice and for ships building. The amount required is such as to ensure a full reserve for all guns at the end of the year without any reduction in the practice of the Fleet. The full practice of the Fleet will be maintained this year, and the reserves will be kept complete. The Vote for guns depends on the ships building. We have fewer ships building, and, therefore, fewer guns will be required. The Vote for torpedoes depends on the number of torpedoes and mines. The mines have been taken away from the War Office, and instead of the system of working mines from the shores, we have now started mine-laying ships. Certain cruisers have been assigned to that particular work. To sum up, the ships completing will have their full ammunition, including the reserve of ammunition for the guns; the practice of the Fleet will be fully provided for and the total of reserve ammunition will be maintained. All this will be effected during the coming financial year. The Ordnance Vote, therefore, is fully adequate.

Now, in asking the attention of the House to the question of the ships, I have to say, in the first place, that some not very well-informed criticisms have been made with regard to the programme of the year. It is said that it is too small, that we are putting off too long, and that this will involve danger in future years. Well, there is something to be said on the other side. I believe that our present position is such that we are perfectly justified is not going on with a very big programme at the present moment. The principle on which our system of construction is founded is a totally different one from that of foreign nations. Foreign nations all make up their programmes of construction for a large number of years—sometimes as many as seventeen or twenty years. My Lords, you are all well aware what an extraordinary development there has been in the building of battleships. All classes of these ships at this moment are very much a question of experiment. We do not know what the types we are now introducing will do, and whether they will succeed or not. But of this I am sure, that we will learn a great deal if we observe prudence. That has been notably the case with the "Dreadnought." I do not at all encourage the repetition of the circumstances of the construction of the "Dreadnought." She was built in thirteen months, and, of course, we were very proud of it. But I do not think it is an experiment we ought to repeat, because the three "Temeraires" are better than the "Dreadnought," and the three "St. Vincents" will again be an advance on the "Dreadnought." It is really wise and good policy, if safety permits, not to enter into too big a programme. In entering into a programme we ought to be sure of the design of the particular new ships which we are going to lay down.

Now let me take the new construction programme of this year. In the first place, there is the fourth "St. Vincent," which is to be laid down at Portsmouth. There is also to be laid down a fourth—what I may call—cruiser battleship, another "Invincible," with improvements. The House will excuse me from saying what they will be; I think we had much better keep that to ourselves. But the result will be that in the spring of 1911 we shall have three squadrons of four of these great ships. We are going to have in one squadron the "Dreadnought" and the three "Temeraires," which will make four of that type. In the three "St. Vincents" and another to be laid down we shall have another homogeneous squadron of the latest improved "Dreadnoughts." We shall have a third squadron of four

"Invincibles;" and I tell your Lordships most confidently that no Power in the world will have such a fleet of first-class battleships as we shall have in the spring of 1911, and I am almost inclined to go so far as to say that a combination of all the Powers in the world will not be able to put an equal squadron against us. I believe that a moderate rate of construction of these great experimental ships is a most desirable thing.

We propose to lay down six cruisers of an intermediate class. One of these cruisers is to be a replica of the "Boadicea"—which, I believe, will be a very useful ship, and will be launched in May. Of the other five cruisers, we frankly say that their design is not yet entirely settled. The Board have not yet had the final designs under consideration. But I will say that they are not "Bodiceas;" they will be considerably larger. The "Boadicea" is about 3,500 tons; the new ones will probably run from 4,000 to 5,000 tons. Again I will not enter into details. They will be protected cruisers—I say nothing further than that—and I believe they will be extremely useful ships. They will have very considerable coal endurance. The idea is that they should be able to keep the sea for a considerable time. They will also be fast ships of 23 or 24 knots. The noble Earl challenged me about destroyers. My information does not altogether bear out his, and mine is more satisfactory.

EARL CAWDOR: You have not taken them from the Dilke Return.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: I take the actual facts as they will be at the end of this month. The noble Earl made great play of the fact that certain torpedo boats which we call coastal destroyers were not of very great value, and had been wrongly classed. Let me say that I think that was an Admiralty mistake. I do not see that it makes any difference, but I think it was a pity that they were given numbers instead of names because really they belong to the coastal destroyer class.

EARL CAWDOR: They are not mentioned as destroyers in the Dilke Return.

***LORD TWEEDMOUTH**: They ought to have been. However, they are not a very large number of ships; there are only fifteen of them.

EARL CAWDOR: They will not affect my figures.

***LORD TWEEDMOUTH**: I count them in as destroyers, and will give a comparison between the British, French, and German destroyer fleets in the Home waters. We expect to have ready at the end of this month, of ocean-going destroyers of 33 knots, 4; of the river class, 34; of 30-knot destroyers, 48; of 27-knot destroyers, 28; of coastal destroyers, 15—making a total of 129. As a matter of fact we shall have altogether 142, but there are under repair or due for repair 13, thus reducing the number to 129. Germany has 57 destroyers, 10 divisional torpedo-boats—altogether 67. The French have 26 destroyers, making a combined total for France and Germany of 93, as compared with the 129 of Great Britain. I may say I have not made any allowance for German or French boats being under repair. If we were to take the same proportion as in our own case of destroyers under repair we should find that Germany and France have only 85 ready, in comparison with 129 of Great Britain.

So far as destroyers of eleven years and under are concerned, our figures for the same date are—ocean-going, 4; river class, 34; 30-knotters, 47; coastal destroyers, 15—a total of 100. The Germans have 57 destroyers and 1 divisional torpedo-boat — 58 in all. The French have 26 destroyers. Altogether Germany and France have 74 destroyers, and we have 100 under eleven years in Home waters. I do not think that is a bad proportion, and, so far as the two-Power standard is concerned, I think I have made a good case for the destroyers. We are going to lay down 16 new destroyers. They will be of the last improved river class, still improved. They will do 33 knots, and I think they will be extremely good craft.

The noble Lord asked me a question about submarines. This year we are doing exactly the same as in former years, devoting £500,000 to the construction of submarines. Class C., which is the last class but one, has been very successful. We are rather proud of the result of our submarines. Class D. is going through trials, and I believe from those trials we shall derive a very considerable amount of knowledge. These Class D. submarines have a much greater sea-going power than the old ones; they will be much more easily moved about from place to place, and will become more and more useful for the purposes of coast defence. We sent submarines last year all the way from Portsmouth to the Firth of Forth, and the results they gave as seaboats were very remarkable. We had much better not hurry in the building of these submarines, until we have full trials of the D. Class, in order that we may see that we are paying our money for what is really likely to be a good article.

I will now briefly state the distribution of our ships over the world at this moment. I would impress upon your Lordships what is the Admiralty policy in this very important matter. We believe that the great matter is to concentrate our big ships and our strongest ships round our own coasts. Naval war will involve instant action. The way you will win success in a naval war is by being able to send your fleets straight at the ships of the other Power. I believe a naval war now would be an extremely short affair; and it is absolutely necessary that our ships should be always at hand and always ready to do the duty required of them. We have scattered over the world a great many ships. We have a squadron of about ten cruisers in Australian waters; we have another small squadron at the Cape; we have another larger squadron again in China, and another in India, which works in the Persian Gulf. These squadrons are all made up of cruisers of different sizes, and I think they are very good for the work they have to do. Special vessels are provided for work in the Persian Gulf and for work in Chinese waters, and I have only to-day been told by Sir E. Grey that the work which Sir Arthur Moore has done in clearing away the pirates in the Canton River is beyond all praise. That very important work has been carried on with great success and tact. That being the case as regards our more scattered ships, I should also say there is a forth cruiser squadron consisting of six cruisers, which is mainly a training ship squadron. They also have the care of the other side of the Atlantic, and look after the fisheries, the West Indies, and so forth, and do very useful work.

Then I come to the fleets that are nearer home. First there is the Mediterranean Fleet, which has six battleships, with three attached cruisers and eleven destroyers, and the Third Cruiser Squadron as its help-mate. The Atlantic Squadron has six battleships and the Second Cruiser Squadron as its companion. Then we have the Channel Fleet, consisting of eight "King Edward VII.'s," the "Swiftsure," the "Triumph," and four other battleships. It has three attached cruisers, thirty destroyers, and has the First Cruiser Squadron as its companion. I believe there is not a fleet in the world that could equal it. I think Lord Charles Beresford has the finest set of ships under him that it is possible to conceive.

I come to the question of the Home Fleet. I wish, in the first place, to make it perfectly clear that we have never suggested that the Home Fleet was a complete fleet yet. The Home Fleet is the last new fleet, and a new fleet cannot spring like Minerva from Jove's brain completely armed and completely fitted up. The Home Fleet will become a very great fleet; it already is a very strong one. At this moment that fleet is cruising.

EARL CAWDOR: That is the Nore Fleet.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: Yes, the Nore Division. It has with it now four battleships—the "Dreadnought," the "Bulwark," the "Majestic," and the "Cæsar." The noble Lord rather found fault because the "Cæsar" was added.

EARL CAWDOR: I did not find fault; I only inquired about the condition of the "Cæsar."

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: The admiral commanding wished to have four battleships with him. The arrangement of the Home Fleet is that there are spare ships at Devonport and Portsmouth which are to be used when the ships in the Home Fleet are under repair or not available. The reason for sending the "Cæsar" was that the admiral wanted a fourth ship, and it was accordingly taken for this particular cruise. The other ships now cruising with the Nore Division of the Home Fleet are the armoured cruisers, "Achilles," "Cochrane," "Natal," and "Warrior," the protected cruisers "Charybdis" and "Dido," the third-class cruiser "Topaze," the scouts "Adventure," "Attentive," and "Patrol," the "Thetis" mine-laying cruiser, the "Circe," "Hebe," and "Jason" torpedo gunboats, and twenty-four destroyers. Altogether there is a total of forty-two vessels now at sea with Admiral Bridgeman.

I now come to the immediate future of the Home Fleet. The "Shannon" is just commissioned and is about to join the Fifth Cruiser Squadron as flagship, instead of the "Leviathan"; the "Minotaur" is completing for sea at Devonport, and will, it is expected, join the Fifth Cruiser Squadron early in April; the "London" battleship, will join the Nore Division at Invergordon in about a week's time; the "Lord Nelson" battleship has been delayed by the strike in the North, so that no date has yet been fixed for her joining the Nore Division; and the "Agamemnon" is undergoing her trials preparatory to joining the Nore Division. I think we may safely rely upon it that by the end of the year the Home Fleet will have become an extraordinarily strong fleet. I think we may be sure that the Home Fleet, if called upon to do its duty, will do it well. We have two different classes of ships which also belong to the Home Fleet, and I believe that what has been done in regard to these classes is an immense improvement on the old Reserve plan. One class of these ships, stationed at Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport, consists of ships with nucleus crews. There is also a second class of Reserve ships which it is not necessary to keep in so completely a ready condition, but which we also shall be able to produce with far greater celerity, at any rate in time to be of the greatest possible service.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: Are nucleus crews taken from the coastguards?

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: No; nucleus crews are taken from the seamen on active service. A nucleus crew consists of a complement. All the higher ratings are in it. We have only to put on men of the lower ranks who have to do, if I may so describe it, the work of hewers of wood and drawers of water. I think I have now pretty well covered the ground with regard to ships.

EARL CAWDOR: There is one question I asked with regard to classification of nucleus crew ships—ships undergoing repairs and still kept in commission, and not noted as undergoing repairs.

*LORD TWEEDMOUTH: That system has been abandoned now. It is true that the two ships in question were put into the Home Fleet because it was thought desirable to keep their crews together until such time as the dockyards could take the ships. There was not room in the dockyard to do the necessary repairs to these ships, and it was thought well to keep the men in them until they could be moved elsewhere. But that system has now been abandoned, and no vessel undergoing extensive refit will be shown as included in the Home Fleet.

A great deal has been said about the way repairs have been carried out. The amount which has been spent in repairs during the last two years is rather remarkable, and disposes of the charges made against the Admiralty in respect to this matter. The amount voted for repairs at home and abroad in the year 1906–7 was £1,628,100, in 1907–8, £1,800,198, and the amount estimated to be expended duirng the next year is £2,194,027. I ought also to say that this year an additional £200,000 will have been spent, and next year an additional £300,000 will be spent on the introduction of cooling apparatus into the magazines of warships. This was found to be of pressing importance, and it was only fair to the officers and men that it should be undertaken, because cordite kept at a high temperature is extremely dangerous and likely to explode. Explosions have taken place in the French Navy, in Japan, and in America through the blowing up of the magazine by this kind of ammunition. I believe that can almost entirely be remedied by this system of cooling, which is done by a process of brine being circulated through tubes, the temperature being kept to about 70°. I am told that the deterioration of cordite does not seriously arise until a temperature of over 90° is reached. Therefore, we have a good margin. We have had only one or two slight accidents, none of them leading to loss of life, but sufficient to put us on our guard. An item under this head will inevitably be found in future Estimates.

Now I come to the question of works, and here I have been met with a considerable difficulty. The Government have decided—I think quite wisely—that no longer should the system of public works loans be resorted to to provide the necessary money, but that the proper course was that the cost of works should be borne in the Estimates for the year. That is sound finance, but it is very inconvenient for the people who have to carry out the principle. The result is that I find myself this year, in respect of loans for works done during the last twenty years, with a charge of no less than £1,260,000; that will go on increasing and in 1911 it will, I think, amount to £1,350,000, and will not begin to diminish till 1924. This is a very serious burden for any Department to bear when it also has very large works to carry out. I am sorry to say that I am face to face with very serious works—works which are of the utmost importance for the Navy and for the safety of the country. In the first place, I have to deal with the position of Portsmouth where new ships cannot be taken in without great difficulty. This is a very serious thing, and we are now making a new lock there of very considerable size. It will take four years to complete, and will cost over £1,000,000. I hope to get the contract let by the middle of June, and we shall then begin it and get on with it as quickly as we can.

I come next to Rosyth, which has been on the Parliamentary *tapis* for a good many years. I think the works proposed there are very much required, for on the whole of the East Coast we have no Government dock which will take a "Dreadnought" or an "Invincible," and it would be impossible for the country to continue in that position. We also want a big home for our big ships, and we propose to use the Forth and this new basin for that purpose. The Forth affords admirable anchorage. A very great number of ships can be accommodated, and even this year it will be used a great deal for the Fifth Cruiser Squadron. We shall get on as quickly as we can with Rosyth, but it is not very easy to do so. There is really prudence in delay. So many experiments have been made with docks and harbours which have proved tremendous failures that we ought to make very certain of our ground and of our plans before we decide finally. One of the great advantages of the Rosyth proposal, as I think, is that there is under this plan a very easy and quick possibility of enlargement. As it stands there is to be a very large entrance which may be used as a dock. There is another dock able to take a "Dreadnought" or an "Invincible," and there is also room left for two other docks, which can be very quickly constructed without interference with the other works if it is thought desirable hereafter. The noble Earl asked me what those docks would cost. I am told that their probable cost would be £350,000 each.

The noble Earl also asked me how long I thought it would be before Rosyth could be made use of. I believe, I hope, we shall be able to do the work, not in ten years, but in seven years. I want to make it quite clear that the small sum put down for Rosyth this year does not indicate any slackness on the part of the Admiralty in pushing the work forward. The Director of Works at the Admiralty has informed me that it will take the whole of his staff until July, working overtime, to finish the necessary drawings for the contract particulars. He says that it is a most faulty system to give out mere sketch plans. The contract should be let by September. With regard to the other point raised by the noble Earl I am advised that under the contract itself a clause which would suggest a higher rate of tender if the work is completed in a short time is not a desirable condition. We think a better plan is one I propose to adopt. I am going to propose that a bonus shall be given to the contractor who takes the work if he completes it quicker than the contract time. Something of this character I am advised is a better plan than the other.

I ought to say that the basin at Rosyth will accommodate twenty-two of these great new battleships of the "Invincible" and "Dreadnought" class double-banked against the quays, and that the dock and lock will each take the "Dreadnought" or "Invincible," and the lock itself would take the "Mauretania" if she were in the dock alone. Then we have in the Rosyth scheme a basin and camber for submarines and for destroyers. The cost of the plan as it stands now in the Royal Gallery is about three and a half millions, including machinery.

Then we shall make what is a very important change; we have determined to shift our torpedo manufactory from Woolwich to Greenock and have our torpedo range at Loch Long, which is very convenient to Greenock. Modern torpedoes have a range of over 6,000 yards, but the longest range we have is 2,500 yards at Portland, and there it cannot be used without inconvenience to the shipping in harbour. At Loch Long we shall have a range of 7,000 yards on the Argyllshire side. I think I ought to say a word in acknowledgment of the great courtesy extended to us by Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart so far as Greenock is concerned, by the Corporation of Glasgow and the County Council of Argyllshire; this has greatly helped us in making the necessary arrangements in regard to this scheme. I think the cost will be something over £100,000. Our intention is, where possible, not to dismiss our men at Woolwich, but to take the greater number of the torpedo experts to Greenock, where they will carry on their work. I believe this can be done at not very high cost and without causing very much inconvenience to the men and their families.

I come now to Haulbowline. There the dock is to be enlarged to a size that will take a "Dreadnought," and that means expenditure of another £100,000. We begin the work this year and hope to get it completed very quickly. It will be a useful addition to our dock accommodation for the big class of ships. These works I bring before your Lordships' attention because they are all pressing, and the carrying out of the work must lead to increase of the Navy Estimates in the near future.

I come now to the question of *personnel*. We may have the finest ships, the finest guns, the finest establishments in the world, but they will not avail us unless we have a good *personnel* to serve us. The human element in the naval service is one of the first things to be considered. A great many people think that an immense saving might be effected by reducing the number of men, but, my Lords, never will I be a party to such a proposal. I believe it is absolutely necessary to keep up our numbers. I daresay an Army may be mobilised in thirteen days, but you must be ready to mobilise your Navy in thirteen hours. You cannot wait for a proclamation for mobilising; you must have the men at hand, in the ships, in the nucleus crews, or in the training establishments. You must have men of long service. A seaman cannot learn his business under six years. He is enlisted now for twelve years, and he may after five years' man's service go into the Royal Naval Reserve. I am thankful to say a great many men do not do so. They can re-enlist after twelve years for another ten years, after which they earn a considerable pension and secure a comfortable future. These men, officers and men, we must have well-trained. The working of a great modern warship is a trade by itself that takes much learning, it requires experts to carry it out satisfactorily, and it would be the rankest folly, the greatest want of economy, not to train the men and not to keep them ready for the time when the call must be made upon them. I do not then agree with the idea that anything considerable in the way of saving can be brought about by reducing the number of men.

I am anxious to do all I can to encourage a good feeling between the Navy and the mercantile marine. The latter can be most useful to us, and I hope they will be, but I say this, we cannot rest ourselves on the chance of calling together the reserves when an emergency arises: there is not the time for it. I think I ought to say a word in favour of the Naval Volunteers. They are a comparatively new force, and they are established on the Thames, the Tyne, the Clyde, and the Severn. They are largely made up of men engaged in shipbuilding and trades allied to that industry and may prove a very useful force. Then again I may remind your Lordships that it would be an unfortunate thing for the mercantile marine if in time of war we were to call off the best of their officers and men. We want the mercantile marine in war time to carry on the trade of the country, just as if war did not exist; the importance of the duties of mercantile seamen would be increased by a state of war, and therefore the best men should be left in that service, though a certain number we should be glad to have helping us. I put it to my noble friend Lord Inverclyde, is there not a good deal to be said for my argument?

With regard to the Coastguard, I have no objection to produce the Report of the Committee on the subject, and I can very shortly tell your Lordships the lines the Admiralty propose to follow. I think it is rather an anomaly that there should be thrown on the Navy the duty of the exciseman. As a matter of fact, in many parts all the work is done by excisemen, though in other places excisemen and coastguards work together. Though I do not think that excise work should be thrown on the Navy and Navy Estimates, I thoroughly believe that the coastguard should continue to do the war signalling and so forth, which is necessary and will become more necessary; it is not a small service. Again, I think they ought to retain the duties they have at present in the way of working the signal apparatus, the rocket apparatus, and the lifeboat service. At this moment undoubtedly the establishment of the coastguard is larger than we want; but I do not mean by reducing the number of the coastguard to reduce our number of seamen. My idea is that as we reduce the number of the coastguard and bring in more of the Customs men, I believe the Customs are perfectly ready to employ old sailors for their particular work; and we should transfer men to places in our seamen's ranks and so increase the strength of our active service.

Before I leave the subject of the *personnel*, I ought to tell the House what is proposed to be done in regard to engineer officers. It is an old question, and was settled by the Admiralty as far back as 1903, but for some reason it has not been carried into effect. In future the improvements in the pay and position of engineer officers will be as follows: Two good service pensions of £200 per annum will be established for engineer vice-admirals and engineer rear-admirals, and two of £150 a year for engineer captains. Pensions for widows and compassionate allowances to orphans of engineer vice-admirals, engineer rear-admirals, and engineer captains will be on the same scale as those for officers of corresponding ranks in the military branch. The pay of an engineer captain will advance from 35s. to 40s. a day by annual increments of 2s. 6d. a day instead of by increments of 1s. a day. The rate of pay of 24s. a day will be granted after sixteen years' service as engineer - lieutenant, or as engineer-lieutenant and engineer-commander combined, with retrospective effect to 1st April, 1903. The scale of retired pay and the ages for compulsory retirement will in future be assimilated to those established for officers of the millitary branch. Good service pensions are now awarded for distinguished services to flag officers and captains of the military branch, to general officers and colonels and lieutenant-colonels of the Royal Marines and to medical officers. It is a just recognition of the services rendered by the engineer officers that good service pensions should be instituted for the corresponding ranks of that branch. These arrangements will be a great boon to engineer officers, and will, I hope, improve their position. Well, my Lords, I end as I began. I hope your Lordships all think this is a case of *salus civitatis suprema lex.* We cannot afford not to keep up the Navy, and I hope all parties without any reserve will do what they can to support the Navy in the great work it has to do.

EARL CAWDOR: My Lords, I am sorry that the noble Lord considered my speech to be a party speech. I am afraid it has become usual when arguments are put forward that are disliked by opponents for the latter to take refuge in the assumption that they were made in a party spirit. I can only repeat that as in the past it has been, so in the future it will be, although I may not succeed to the satisfaction of the noble Lord, my endeavour to keep party out of Naval controversy.

May I ask the noble Lord when it is likely the six cruisers will be laid down, and when they are likely to be ready for commission? The noble Lord talked a good deal about finance, and suggested that the present Estimates are no light burden on the taxpayer. They are not. But if we compare it with the burden that will have to be laid on the shoulders of the taxpayer in the future, it may be found that it would have been much better for him to bear rather more this year and less in the future. I agree that the further we can set back the building of new battleships the better, but only provided that this postponement is not inconsistent with the maintenance of the two-Power standard, because the later the building the more perfect will be the design.

But we may then be confronted with another difficulty—the consideration of how much of a burden can be put on the taxpayer through the Estimates in any one given year or number of years. We cannot, therefore, keep back our battleships only to put them all in again two or three years hence in a great struggle to keep up the two-Power standard. The wiser policy is to spread their building more evenly over the years. The noble Lord has not told us quite all the story with regard to the position in 1911. His statement brought us up to the spring of that year. The statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was that by January, 1911, we should have twelve ships of this class. But when we come to November or December, 1911, which is the critical time for comparison, the Germans, if they are able to carry out their programme in the time suggested, will have thirteen, so that we should be one short. If the noble Lord had brought his story up to the autumn of 1911 he would have made a completer story. His colleague in another place has, however, supplied the information up to the autumn of that year. With regard to the nucleus crew ships under repair, I think we have been a little led astray by the statement of one of the noble Lord's colleagues in another place. Accepting the statement now made by the noble Lord, I come to the coastal destroyers, and I would urge that they should be kept in either one category or another, not taken out of the destroyers category at one time and put into the torpedo category at another. They should have some more secure and continuous resting-place. As the noble Lord said, the figures which he was kind enough to give as to the destroyers, answered the figures I gave, and I assume that the noble Lord will give them in a Parliamentary Return.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: That shall be done.

EARL CAWDOR: I hope they will be given as far back as 1893, and that the figures for other countries will also be given. We shall then be able to see how many destroyers exist in each country of eleven years and under. I gather from the noble Lord's explanation regarding the Nore Fleet, that the Commander-in-Chief, on going out for his fleet exercises on 9th March, was anxious to take with him four battleships. He had six under his command at Chatham, and these six belonged to the Nore Fleet, which, it was stated, were always to be ready for sea at a moment's notice. They included the "London," the "Magnificent," and the "Victorious." Was none of those vessels fit to make up a fourth vessel? Apparently not, for they had to go to Devonport and fetch the "Cæsar" and leave the three others behind at Chatham. This seems to confirm the view some people had that half the battleships in the Nore Fleet at Chatham were unfit to go to sea. The noble Lord's explanation was not reassuring.

With respect to the two-Power standard, I regret that the noble Lord has not been able to accept the form of words which I suggested. He preferred to give his assurance in a form which appeared to be based on the consideration whether a combination between certain Powers was probable. That is to rest the two-Power standard on something of a quicksand. The temptation is offered to a Minister under great pressure to put the two-Power standard on a basis for economic purposes which at the same moment would be undesirable as far as the safety of the country was concerned. I know of no safe plan of dealing with this two-Power standard but that of putting it on the bed-rock footing of always being absolutely supreme against whatever two Powers are strongest at sea, whether they are likely to oppose us or not. The noble Lord having been good enough to promise some Papers, I will withdraw my Motion and thank the noble Lord for the kindness and care with which he has endeavoured to answer the many questions with which I am afraid I have troubled him.

LORD LAMINGTON: I should like to ask for an answer to my question as to the Home Fleet being brought together.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: They are brought together for twenty days, and it is at the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief as to how the vessels are to be exercised during that time. They were exercised in smaller divisions, and were, I suppose, doing as good work as could be done by the whole fleet manœuvring during the whole of these days together. In reply to Earl Cawdor, the "Magnificent" and "Victorious" were two of the battleships under repair. The "London" goes to join the fleet at Invergordon in a week's time. The six cruisers I spoke of will probably be laid down in October. With regard to the destroyers, their being numbered instead of named led to the confusion complained of in the lists. The Controller found himself at a great loss to decide on names for these smaller ships, so he decided to number them. It was that which led to the difficulty.

Motion (by leave of the House), withdrawn.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.].

Moved, that a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill.

Agreed to.

The Lords following were named of the Committee :—

L. Saltoun.
L. Stanley of Alderley.
L. Lawrence.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Haversham.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman: Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint the Five Members of that House to be joined with the said Committee pursuant to the Resolution of this House of the 5th instant and to the Message of the House of Commons of Thursday last signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 18*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz. :—Camborne Water Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Derby Gas Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP C).

Mr. WHITBREAD reported from the Committee on Group C of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP A).

Mr. MOONEY reported from the Committee on Group A of Private Bills; That the parties promoting the Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill had stated that the evidence of Dr. William Williams, Medical Officer of Health, Cardiff, and Isaac Davies, of Abergwynfi, Schoolmaster, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that their attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Dr. William Williams and Isaac Davies do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That the said Dr. William Williams and the said Isaac Davies do attend the Committee on Group A of Private Bills To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill—Report [17th March] from the Select Committee on Standing Orders read.

Bill to be read a second time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Amendments to Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL AND LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Weston-super-Mare, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Dorchester; Kidderminster; Salisbury; and Wickwar; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions for alteration: From Biggleswade; and Tulse Hill and West Norwood; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Great Harwood; Lancashire and Cheshire (two); Larkhall; Lower Broughton; Manchester; and Manchester and Salford; to lie upon the Table.

SWAZILAND.

Petition of Malungi Nkosi and other Swazi Chiefs, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN BILL.

Petition from Ayrshire, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CHECKWEIGHING AT LIME AND CEMENT WORKS, ETC., (DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES).

Copy presented, of Reports to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by the Departmental Committees on Checkweighing in: (1) Cement Works and Chalk Quarries, and (2) Lime Works and Limestone Quarries [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3962 and 3963 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRANSVAAL GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED LOAN.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 25th February, 1908, embodying the Treasury Guarantee of the Transvaal Treasury Bills issued under Section 1 (3) of the Transvaal Loan (Guarantee) Act, 1907, on 1st February, 1908, to a total amount of £500,000 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Criminal Appeal Rules.—Copy of the Criminal Appeal Rules, 1908 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Promotion in the Civil Service.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the present discontent in the subordinate ranks of the Civil Service as to their pay and prospects is due to the attitude of the higher permanent officials; whether he is aware that some of these gentlemen have at all stages of their official career, particularly in the Post Office, opposed the legitimate and temperate claims of subordinate civil servants, many of which, after investigation, have since been granted; and whether, in view of the many service questions still unsettled, he will arrange, in the public interest, that these disputes shall be submitted to the arbitration of a Committee of the House, which will have the power of carrying out its own findings.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The Answer to all three Questions is in the negative.

Erection of New School at Caddy, Randalstown.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if plans and specifications have been prepared for the erection of a new school at Caddy, Randalstown; and, if so, can he explain the cause for the delay in proceeding with the work of building.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The manager's special plans and specification have been approved and a grant has been sanctioned. A lease of the site of the new schoolhouse was sent to the manager on 7th instant for execution and, pending the receipt of this document duly executed, the Commissioners of National Education cannot issue the necessary authorisation for proceeding with the building.

Distribution of Untenanted Land on the Lambert Minors Estates.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a number of tenants on the Lambert Minors property, agricultural, Athenry, have been in the habit of going a distance away to sow conacre potatoes and other crops; whether this year some of them have to travel long distances to try and procure land for the purpose; and whether he will communicate with the Estates Commissioners and press upon them the urgency of distributing the untenanted lands on this property with the least possible delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have communicated with the Estates Commissioners, who inform me that they can add nothing to the statement already made, namely, that as soon as the arrangements for re-sale have been completed the sale will be carried through as quickly as possible.

Australian and New Zealand State Railways.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will, for the general information of Members, make a statement showing the original cost, the present earnings, and financial position of the Australian and New Zealand State Railways, showing also the amount derived by the States from the railways over and above the interest paid on cost of construction and working.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The information asked for by the hon. Member, so far as it is available, will be included in the Return ordered by the House at the instance of my hon. friend the Member for North Paddington. The Return will be issued in about a fortnight's time.

Registration of Workmen's Clubs.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, how many workmen's clubs are registered under the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, respectively; whether such registration is voluntary and involves the making of the rules and balance sheets of such clubs accessible to the public; and whether such balance sheets indicate an expenditure of less than 9d. per week in such clubs upon intoxicating drink.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that the number of working men's clubs registered under the Friendly Societies Act is 1,071. Working men's clubs are not registered as such under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, but there are a number of societies incorporated under those Acts whose object is to carry on the business of club proprietors. It is probable that a good many carry on the business of working men's clubs, some of them, perhaps, more than one club. Every society, both under the Friendly Societies Act and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, is bound by statute to supply a copy of its rules to every person on demand on payment of not exceeding 1s., also to supply gratuitously a copy of its last annual balance sheet to every member or person interested in the funds, but not to the public. There are no statistics available from which I can answer the last part of the Question.

English Licence Duties on Irish Motors.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if he can explain why an Irish motorist is obliged to pay licence duty to the Board of Inland Revenue on a motor car which may only be passing through Great Britain, notwithstanding the fact that he is registered in Ireland as the owner of such motor; can he say why an Irish motorist, keeping a motor car in Great Britain, is obliged to pay licence duty for a whole year, and in addition thereto is liable to a fine for failing to take out a licence, although he may have only used the car there for one day; and if he will take steps to remedy this alleged grievance.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) There is no exemption from licence duty in favour of motor cars used in Great Britain by persons resident elsewhere, and I see no reason to alter the law.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the licence duty demanded from a motorist registered in Ireland is remitted by the Board of Inland Revenue to the district in which the car has been used for the upkeep of the roads in such district.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The duty in question goes to the local authorities of the area in which the licence is taken out.

Pacific Cable—Increase of Grants-in-Aid.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can give any further explanation than that contained in the Estimates of the fact that the estimated grant-in-aid to the Pacific Cable for the year 1908–9 shows a considerable increase over the estimated grant for 1907–8.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) In estimating the amount of the grant-in-aid required for any year, account is taken of the probable balance in the hands of the Board at the beginning of the year available for expenditure. Last year it was estimated that the balance available on 1st April, 1907, would be £20,355, and the grant-in-aid was reduced by that amount. The balance available on 1st April, 1908, is now estimated at £6,976, and this difference accounts for the increase in the grant-in-aid. The estimated excess of expenditure over traffic receipts is practically the same for the two years.

Herring Fisheries (Scotland) Act.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will consider the desirability of extending Section 8 of the Herring Fishing (Scotland) Act, 1889, so as to prohibit, not only in Scotland but throughout the United Kingdom the landing and selling of fish caught in contravention of that Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The Government have not lost sight of this suggestion; but I am unable at this moment to give any undertaking as to additional legislation this session.

Foreign Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the number of instances, month by month, in which foreign trawlers have been reported as fishing within the Moray Firth during the twelve months ended February last

(*Answered by Mr Sinclair*) The numbers asked for are as follows:—1907: March, 45; April, 8; May, 3; June, 13; July, 6; August, 4; September, 1; October, 5; November, 22; December, 26. 1908: January, 15; February, 7; in all 155.

School Grants.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will circulate a Memorandum showing the total amount of grant which would have been payable to each local educational authority, and the amount which this sum would have represented per child in average attendance at the schools of the said authority, for the year 1906–7, if the scheme of grants described in Cd. Paper 3945 had then been in force, and if no schools had contracted out.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I am having a Memorandum prepared showing, as far as possible, the amount which each local education authority would have received in the financial year ending on 31st March, 1908, if the new scheme of grants had been in operation. The results must, however, be to some extent based on estimates and not on actual figures, inasmuch as a considerable portion of the audited financial statements of local education authorities for the year 1906–7, upon which the calculation of the grant for loan charges is based, have not yet been received or examined. It may also be necessary for the same reason to ignore the limitation of the grant to 75 per cent. of the local authority's expenditure, the financial effect of which will not in any case be great and will be still less in 1909–10, the earliest year in which the new system could become operative.

School Grants—Children under Five Years of Age.

MR. HAROLD COX: To ask the President of the Board of Education what would be, approximately, the saving on the Vote for Elementary Education in the forthcoming year if no grant were paid on account of children under four years of age, and what would be the saving if no grant were paid on account of children under five years of age.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The average attendance of children under five years during the statistical year ending 31st July, 1907, was 367,206. The numbers have been decreasing, and it may be assumed that the average attendance of such children on which grant will become payable in 1908–9 will be about 300,000. If this average attendance were disallowed for the purpose of all grants, the saving on the Vote would be about £577,000. No separate figures are available for children under four years of age.

The Duke of York's School.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): To ask the First Commissioner of Works under what statutory authority the site and buildings of the Duke of York's Royal Military School at Chelsea are vested in the charge of the Commissioner of Works.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) Under The Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea (Transfer) Act, 1884 (47 and 48 Vict., cap. 32).

British and Foreign Naval Expenditure on New Construction.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what was the amount of money devoted to new construction for the years 1906 and 1907, together with the total naval expenditure, by France, Germany, and Russia, respectively, during the corresponding period and for the like purpose.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*)

Total Naval Expenditure and Expenditure on New Construction and Armament of France, Germany, and Russia for the years 1906 and 1907.

Country.	Year.	Total Expenditure.	Expenditure on New Construction and Armament.
		£	£
France (financial year, 1st January to 31st December)	1906	13,003,238	5,702,267
	1907	12,486,793	5,132,494
Germany (financial year, 1st April to 31st March)	1906	12,005,871	5,342,466
	1907	13,623,924 (estimated)	6,285,225
Russia (financial year, 1st January to 31st December (o. s.)	1906	12,490,444 (voted)	4,576,553 (voted)
	1907	8,871,327 (voted)	2,870,028 (voted)
Total - - -	-	72,481,597	29,909,033

NOTE.—The figures for Russia do not include £1,800,000 subscribed by voluntary contributions and expended during the years 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907.

Hollesley Bay Labour Colony Accounts.

Sir F. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he will state, from the accounts of the Hollesley Bay labour colony as examined by the Local Government Board, how he arrives at the figures of £100,000 as representing the cost of the settlement in less than four years, and of £22,000 a year as the net loss per annum of the settlement; and what were the receipts set off against the total gross cost of £100,000.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My hon. friend no doubt refers to my speech in the House on Friday last. The sum of £100,000 mentioned by me as the gross cost of the estate was a round figure; the exact sum is £97,287. This is made up of £43,475, representing the total cost of purchase, and £53,812, representing the gross cost of maintenance from the date of the transfer of the farm colony to the Central Body, 11th December, 1905, to the 28th ultimo, a period of about two and a quarter years. As regards the sum of £22,000, I see from the manuscript note of my speech that this should be £21,000. This also was a round figure. The exact figure supplied to me by the Central Unemployed Body is £20,954, and relates to the year ended 31st March, 1907. The receipts to be set off against the total gross cost of £97,287 incurred between 11th December 1905 and 28th February last amount to £12,078 7s. 11d.

Sir F. CHANNING: To ask the President of the Local Government Board, what has been the average cost per man per week, and what is now the average cost per man per week, at Hollesley Bay and at Laindon, as shown in the accounts as examined by the Local Government Board; whether this cost includes the maintenance of the wives and children of the men in those labour colonies; what is the average number of wives and children so included and the average number of men in the colonies with wives and children; and what is the corresponding cost per man with wife and similar proportion of children in the metropolitan workhouses and in the workhouses of provincial towns and in rural counties.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As regards the farm colony at Hollesley Bay, the following statement gives the particulars desired of the average cost of maintenance of each man sent to the colony during the financial year ended on 31st March, 1907, and similar particulars relating to the period between 1st April, 1907 and 28th February, 1908.

Period.	Average gross cost of maintenance per head per week.	Deduct average receipts from sales &c., per head per week.	Net cost of maintenance per head per week.
	s.	s.	s.
1st April, 1906, to 31st March, 1907 - -	37·34	7·16	30·18
1st April, 1907, to 28th February, 1908 - -	44·12	11·97	32·15

The payments made by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London in aid of the maintenance of the wives and children of the men sent to the colony are included in the above statement, but the annual charge in respect of the loan raised to defray the costs of the purchase of the colony is not included. I have no information as to the number of women and children dependent on the men sent to the colony during the period covered by the statement. As regards the branch workhouse at Laindon I recently gave the cost per inmate as 24s. per week. This rate was based on the latest figures in my possession of one year's expenditure at that institution, after giving credit for the value of the produce sold or consumed, and on an average number of inmates taken at 143. It includes a figure for the cost of the relief given separately by the guardians to the wives and children. I am not able to give the precise information asked for as regards the number of wives and children as distinguished from the cost of their relief, but I am informed that the largest number of inmates on any day between 25th February and 7th March, 1908, was ninety-eight, that with three exceptions all the men had dependents, and that the average number of children in each case was between three and four. It is not possible to give corresponding figures of cost with respect to the cases referred to in the last part of the Question; but I may draw the attention of my hon. friend to the statistics given at page 148 of the last Annual Report of the Local Government Board relative to the cost of the relief of indoor and outdoor paupers in London and the provinces.

Imports of Plain Potato Spirit.

MR. HADDOCK (Lancashire, North Lonsdale): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he can state the number of proof gallons of plain potato spirit imported during the year 1907, and the names of the countries from which it came.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. Plain potato spirit is included on importation under the general heading of "Unenumerated spirits," and no separate records exist. I regret, therefore, that I am unable to give the information desired.

Sale of the Duke of York's School.

MR. HART-DAVIES: To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the consent of Parliament has been given to the sale of the site of the Duke of York's Military School and the transfer of the school to Dover.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) There is no special statutory sanction for this, and I am advised that such is not necessary.

Issue of New Short Rifle to the Yeomanry.

MR. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he can state the date on which the new short rifle will be ready for issue to the Yeomanry; and whether, in view of the fact that the musketry season is from April to September, he will do his utmost to get the rifle issued by the beginning of April.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am afraid that it will not be practicable to issue the rifles and accoutrements until after the training season is over. Every effort will be made to hasten the supply; but I cannot at present give any definite date.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

H.M.S. "Indus."

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what number of naval police are employed on H.M.S. "Indus" training establishment for stoker ratings.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): Four, sir.

Warships at Hayti.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty where the two warships sent to Hayti were at the time of the outbreak there, and when they are expected to arrive at the island.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The "Indefatigable" was at Jamaica and arrived at Hayti on Monday evening. The "Cressy" was on passage from Bermuda to Jamaica. She was expected to be passing within 120 miles of Port au Prince on Monday night.

Discharges of Tuberculous Soldiers.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of soldiers discharged during 1907 suffering from tuberculosis, and who were in receipt of a pension; and the number of men discharged during the same period suffering from the same disease and who were in receipt of a pension due to having contracted the disease while in the service or due to the climate where serving.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Three hundred and fifty-seven men were invalided for tuberculosis during the year 1907. Of these, 216 received pensions (most of them temporary in the first instance) and of these, fifty contracted the disease owing to their military service, and forty from climate.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): In view of these figures will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider his decision with regard to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on this question?

MR. HALDANE: That is a matter now beyond the province of the War Office.

Enfield Factory Apprentices.

MR. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that lads who are engaged as apprentices at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, are uniformly discharged on reaching the age of 21, when they have learnt their trade and become competent workmen; and whether he will consider the desirability of discontinuing this course in view of the cost to the State of training these lads, and in the interests of the lads and the parents who have to support them upon small wages during the period of apprenticeship.

MR. HALDANE: There are points connected with this question which are under consideration, and I shall be glad if my hon. friend would put the Question to me again at a later date.

Lord Roberts and the Territorial Army Artillery.

MR. ARNOLD FORSTER (Croydon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the opinion expressed by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts to the effect that the artillery of the Territorial Army must be not useless but dangerous in war, the Army Council propose to persist in the policy of spending public money on the creation of 196 batteries of this class of artillery; and whether, in view of the great importance of the question, he will lay upon the Table the Report of a Departmental Committee, under the presidency of General Mackinnon (Director of Auxiliary Forces), appointed in 1905 to consider the advisability of creating Volunteer field batteries, together with the minutes referring to the same, by Sir Frederick Stopford, Director of Military Training, Sir Neville Lyttelton, Chief of the General Staff, and the Secretary of State for War, dated respectively the 29th September, the 6th October, the 7th October, and the 13th November, 1905.

MR. HALDANE: The policy of giving the Second Line Army a real military organisation, including all arms and services, was deliberately adopted last year by both Houses of Parliament after full discussion, and it is not now proposed to modify this policy in any respect. The gallant Field-Marshal's criticisms, to which the right hon. Gentleman alludes, appear to me to apply as much to the whole Territorial Force as to the Artillery portion of it. As regards the last part of the Question, I cannot undertake to lay on the Table documents which refer to discussions which took place between my predecessor in office and his confidential advisers.

MR ARNOLD-FORSTER: Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether the officers named were amongst those who he stated were in favour of the policy of 1906?

MR. HALDANE: I do not propose to criticise or cross-question on this Question.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Will the right hon. Gentleman give the House the names of any distinguished or important soldier who is in favour of this proposal?

MR. HALDANE: There is a very large number.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Is it not the case that the value of the Field-Marshal's criticism as an expert is greatly lessened by his marked political bias?

[No Answer was returned.]

Militia Adjutants.

LORD J. JOICEY-CECIL (Lincolnshire, Stamford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has had under his consideration the cases of hardship inflicted on adjutants of the disbanded Militia battalions, some of whom, having been appointed just prior to the issuing of the Order for disbandment, have incurred great and apparently unnecessary expense; and what steps he proposes to take.

MR. HALDANE: During the last twelve months six adjutants have been appointed to Militia battalions which have since been disbanded. Two of these officers have been re-appointed to other battalions, and as far as possible the wishes of the remaining officers will be favourably considered.

Militia Battalion Colours.

LORD J. JOICEY-CECIL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the officers of a Militia battalion assembling at headquarters to hand over their colours to the lord-lieutenant will be entitled to the same pay and allowances for the day as if assembling for the annual training.

MR. HALDANE: Instructions have been issued that as regards colours application should be submitted to the War Office for authority to deposit them in a church or other public building, and that no other method of disposal could be sanctioned.

The Sale of the "Coach and Horses."

MR. ARTHUR LEE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in connection with the sale by auction of the "Coach and Horses" public-house at Portsmouth on 18th July, 1907, a reserve price of £9,500 was placed on lot 1, comprising the house, and £500 on lot 2, comprising the garden; or, if these figures are incorrect, will he state what was the reserve price fixed by the War Office.

MR. HALDANE: The reserve price was £10,000, as stated in the Question.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the best offer the purchaser has been able to get for his property since the Licensing Bill was introduced has been the sum of £4,400?

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): Is the property for sale?

MR. HALDANE: I am not aware of it; it is news to me.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been called to the statement by the purchaser that the average profits for thirty years past amount to only 3¼ per cent. on the outlay, and whether, under the circumstances, he will consider the equity of returning one half of the purchase money?

MR. HALDANE: There have been so many statements made upon the subject of the Licensing Bill that I am quite unable to follow them.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: My Question did not refer to the Licensing Bill, but to the profits of this particular house, which was recently in the hands of the Government, and whether, having regard to the fact that it is impossible within the fourteen years' time limit for the purchaser from the Government to recoup himself, the Government will consider the justice of returning one half of the purchase money.

[No Answer was returned.]

Transvaal Garrison.

SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state how much money has been expended on the establishment of the military garrison at Middleburg, Transvaal, the number of troops that garrison is capable of accommodating, and what is intended to be done with this garrison now it has been abandoned for military purposes.

MR. HALDANE: The buildings for the garrison at Middleburg, Transvaal, cost £248,000, and provided accommodation for fifty-four officers and 2,440 men. As in other cases, on reduction of the garrison, the building material will be transferred elsewhere if required.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on Trent): Are the barracks going to be pulled down?

MR. HALDANE: It is a most costly policy to keep barracks you do not want.

Territorial Force—Attestation Form.

MR. GUY BARING (Winchester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will give a clearer definition of the words attesting officer and approving officer contained in the Territorial Force attestation form.

MR. HALDANE: The recruiting regulations specify the individuals who are entitled to attest and approve recruits. The Territorial Force Act lays down that any Lieutenant or Deputy-Lieutenant of a county in the United Kingdom or an officer in the Regular or Territorial Force may be an attesting officer for the Territorial Force as well as a Justice of the Peace. The approving officer may be as a rule an officer not below the rank of field officer of the unit, the adjutant, or officer commanding recruiting areas, Regular units of cavalry, artillery, engineers or infantry or the officer commanding at a military station.

Wales and the Territorial Army.

SIR IVOR HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the brigadiers to be appointed to the command of brigades of the Territorial Army in the thirteen counties of Wales will be in receipt of pay; where the headquarters of the several brigades will be established; and what will be the number of officers to be appointed to the staffs of the same brigades, and what will be the amount of their emoluments.

MR. HALDANE: The situation of the headquarters of Territorial Force infantry brigades will be determined as soon as the colonels commanding these brigades and brigade majors, of whom the staff will consist, are appointed and will be settled by the County Associations in consultation with the general officer commanding. These officers will receive a consolidated allowance of £150 and £100 a year respectively to cover all personal expenses and remuneration, except travelling on duty, with the addition of acting staff pay and the allowance of their rank and a free horse while present at the annual training in camp of their brigades. A grant will be paid to the Association in which the headquarters are for the provision of any office accommodation and clerical assistance necessary for the brigade staff.

Volunteer Long Service Medal.

MR. SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has considered the case of the many capable and efficient men whose careers, after serving for many years in the Volunteer Forces, will be cut short under the rearrangements consequent on the carrying out of the new Territorial Army scheme, before completing the full term of years entitling them to the long service medal; and what he proposes to do to save these men the double disappointment consequent on their disbandment and the loss of their medals.

MR. HALDANE: I have not lost sight of the case of the men who do not propose to continue in the service, and who may therefore be unable to complete the period necessary to qualify for the grant of the medal. It is intended to meet this point by special regulations which are now under consideration.

Army Reports.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when the Report of His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught's Committee on the state of the Army will be published.

MR. HALDANE: The Question apparently refers to the Annual Report of His Royal Highness as Inspector-General of the Forces. May I refer the hon. Baronet to the decision of the right hon. Gentleman, my predecessor, explained to the House on 15th March, 1905, that the Annual Report of the Inspector-General of the Forces would not be published—a decision with which I entirely agree?

Government Church at Jullundur.

MR. BRIGHT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what circumstances connected with the use of the Government church at Jullundur for services according to the rites of the

Presbyterian churches of Scotland preceded the orders to the Gordon Highlanders to go to Calcutta, and for what reasons did the licence given by the Bishop of Lahore forbid the celebration of the Holy Communion; and whether any objections were made by the chaplains of the Church of Scotland or the officers of the regiment.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): I have no information as to the circumstances preceding the transfer, nor do I know whether any objections were made by the chaplains of the Church of Scotland. The Bishop's licence was framed in accordance with what I understand to have been the general practice of the Indian bishops in recent years.

SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is now able to state whether the licence given by the Bishop of Lahore to the Gordon Highlanders to use the Government Church in the Jullundur Cantonment excluded them from celebrating Holy Matrimony or the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by Presbyterian ministers in that building; whether the Gordon Highlanders engaged a theatre in the station for holding divine services according to the rites of the Churches of Scotland; and whether there has been any instance on record during the administration of India by the Honourable East India Company or under the direct government by the Crown of Presbyterian soldiers being officially precluded from celebrating the Lord's Supper in an Indian Government church.

MR. MORLEY: As to the first two Questions, I have no definite information. I understand that for some years past, the Bishops have refused to allow Holy Communion to be celebrated according to Presbyterian rites in consecrated churches, and I can only regret that they should feel bound in conscience to take this view of their duty.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): Are the bishops within their legal right?

MR. MORLEY: I am told it is so.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table Papers giving the legal authority under which the bishops monopolise these Government churches?

MR. MORLEY: There is a perfectly good historical answer to my hon. friend's question, but it would take too long to give it now.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Are not the fabrics of the Church of England supported by the taxation of the Indian people, and are the movements of His Majesty's troops to be dictated by the Bishop of Lahore?

MR. MORLEY: All that is done is within the law.

*SIR J. JARDINE: Did the troops have to engage a theatre? and was the regiment offered an outside shed with a sort of off-license as regards the sacrament?

MR. SPEAKER: Notice must be given of any further Question.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any part of the Ecclesiastical Law of England has been extended directly or *sub modo* to such distant places in Upper India such as the Jullundur Cantonment, so as to vest the Government churches in the bishops of the Church of England; whether the Governor-General in Council or the Commander-in-Chief in India has any power to require that such churches be open at regulated hours to the officers and men of Scottish regiments and their families stationed at such places for the purpose of divine services, including the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and Holy Matrimony; and whether, now that under the present rules the Gordon Highlanders and their families have been marched right across India to Calcutta so as to be able to attend a Presbyterian church, he can see his way to divest the Indian bishops of the powers of vetoing the use of the Government churches by Presbyterian soldiers, and vest that power in the higher military or civil authorities of the Provinces or in the Government of India.

Mr. MORLEY: The question of law as regards Indian church buildings has been submitted more than once to high legal authorities, who have unanimously held that, so far as consecrated buildings are concerned, Government would not be justified in causing any services other than those of the Church of England to be performed without the consent of the bishop, or in interfering with the bishop's control over the building. Garrison churches are not now consecrated to the use of the Church of England, except when separate provision is made for other denominations, and in view of the arrangement recently made not to post Scottish troops to stations having no Presbyterian or unconsecrated church, except in temporary emergencies, I see now no sufficient reason to introduce legislation to alter the *status* of consecrated churches.

Sir J. JARDINE: I give notice that I will call attention to this matter on the earliest opportunity, and move a resolution.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): Has the Episcopal Church of England any rights in India that the Presbyterian Church or other religious bodies have not?

Mr. MORLEY: I would not describe the state of facts quite in that language, but there is no doubt that by an old statute the Church of England has certain privileges in consecrated churches.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GREY (St. Andrews Burghs): Will the right hon. Gentleman make provision to extend these privileges to the Scottish Church?

Mr. MORLEY: No; if I were to interfere at all in the matter it would be to withdraw privileges altogether.

Mr. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): Arising out of the refusal of the right hon. Gentleman to promote legislation, may I ask whether the Government of India regard the defence of India as of less importance than the prejudices of the bishops?

[No Answer was returned.]

Whipping Act in India.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Bill for the amendment of the Whipping Act, which has been introduced into the Legislative Council of the Government of India, reduces the number of stripes for juveniles and tends to limit the number in other cases such as rape and robbery with violence; whether the Bill still permits the punishment of flogging for petty larceny; whether it contains a provision that no whipping should be inflicted by order of a Court unless and until the person convicted has had a reasonable opportunity of carrying his case before a Court of Appeal; and whether he is now in a position to give any further information regarding the character and tendency of the proposed legislation.

Mr. MORLEY: I have not yet received the text of the Bill as introduced. When I do so I will place a copy in the Library.

Indian Decentralisation.

Mr. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can state to the House the reasons for the curtailment of the investigations in India of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation.

Mr. MORLEY: I am not aware that the Royal Commission has curtailed its investigations. The chairman is coming home a fortnight earlier than he had originally intended, for reasons unconnected with the work of the Commission.

Meherpur Disturbances.

Mr. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the punitive police sent to protect the Moslems at Meherpur shot dead two of the Moslems and severely injured many others, and that the cost of the punitive police was placed upon the Hindus; and whether he will cause a public inquiry to be made into this matter with a view to finding out the reason that induced the authorities to send the punitive police to the locality, and as to why the cost was only placed upon the Hindus.

MR. MORLEY: I have no knowledge of any such occurrences at Meherpur. If my hon. friend means Sherpur, it is the case that a riot occurred there in September in which the police, firing in self-defence, killed two rioters and wounded eight. The additional police had been stationed there in the interests of the public tranquillity, on account of the serious disturbances that took place in the district in April and May. I am not aware that they were intended to protect any one section of the population rather than any other; nor have I any reason to believe that the cost was placed only upon the Hindus.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Is the fact that two members of their community were shot a reason for charging the cost of the punitive police against the Mahomedans, who form a majority of the population, but are the victims of the boycott?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mymensingh Disturbances Report.

MR. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the report of Mr. Bhupendranath Bose, a leading Calcutta solicitor, and Lieutenant-Colonel Mukerji, with regard to the Mymensingh disturbance of 3rd January and the following dates; whether he is aware that the gentleman named asked Mr. Clark, the district magistrate, to allow a responsible police official to be present during the investigations, such request being refused; and, having regard to the allegations of unprovoked assault and robbery against the local police, what steps he intends taking to allay the effect such unofficial report must have upon the people of India generally.

MR. MORLEY: I have been favoured with a copy of the report, from which it appears that Mr. Clark was unable to permit the attendance of a police officer, because there was not time to obtain the sanction of the higher authorities. A fortnight before this "unofficial commission" commenced its inquiries, the local government had directed the additional magistrate at Mymensing to hold a special inquiry, the result of which I await.

Excise Duties on Jamaica Manufactures.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the amount of the excise, as distinct from the customs, duties on soap and matches manufactured in the island of Jamaica for the past three years.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): Under Law 26 of 1900, the excise duty levied on soap was at the rate of 10d. per box of 56 lbs., and under Law 12 of 1901, the excise duty levied on matches was 3d. per gross of boxes. By Law 1 of 1905, the excise duty on matches was raised to 6d. per gross of boxes. Law 6 of 1905, increased the excise duties on both articles for so long as the surcharge of 6 per cent. was levied on imports. Under this law a surtax of 2d. per box was imposed on soap, and 9s. 9d. per 100 gross of boxes on matches. The surcharge on imports was abolished on 27th February, 1906, when, of course, the surtax on the excise would cease also.

Property Tax in Jamaica.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware that the tax payable on property in Jamaica over the value of £1,000 is limited to 1s. in every £10, and that the tax on values under £1,000 may go from 1s. to 5s. as may be required; and, if so, can he state whether it is the intention of the Government to make any alteration with a view to the abolition of this distinction in favour of those with higher incomes.

MR. CHURCHILL: The property tax in Jamaica is payable at the rate of 8d. on every £10 of the gross value of real property, and there is no such distinction as that described by the hon. Member. In the case of the parish general rates, which are collected for parochial purposes, it is provided that the rate to be levied on every £10 of the value of any property after and in excess of £1,000 shall in no case exceed 1s. in every £10 of such value. This limitation was imposed with a view to discouraging extravagence on the part of local bodies, and to prevent unduly heavy burdens falling on the larger properties, and it was calculated that the effect of this limitation would (in parishes where it applied) only increase the rates on other properties by about ½d. on the average. The Secretary of State sees no reason for the amendment of the law in this respect, the limitation having been imposed as a concession to the elected members of the legislature and generally accepted as satisfactory.

Depression in the Diamond Trade.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies how many natives discharged from the Kimberley and the Premier diamond mines, owing to depression in the diamond trade, are now employed on the Rand mines.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am not in a position to give the figures desired by the hon. Member.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the right hon. Gentleman get the information?

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir. I have already told the House that I am loth to burden the Transvaal Government with unnecessary requests for information. They are very good in supplying information, but the getting it involves them in considerable expense, and we must be sparing with our calls on the internal administration of self-governing Colonies.

Labour for Southern Rhodesia.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the destination for which natives in Central Africa are recruited under official sanction.

MR. CHURCHILL: Southern Rhodesia only.

Indians at Vancouver.

MR. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the fact that fifteen Indians arriving at Vancouver on the steamer "Empress," of Japan, and who were passed by the Dominion immigration authorities and released from the detention shed, were at once informed that as they could not comply with the provisions of the Natal Act they must be deported, and on their refusal to re-embark were imprisoned; and, in view of the fact that the Natal Act does not apply to Japanese or Chinese immigrants, he will make representations to the Government of Canada that the Natal Act in its special application to Indian Asiatics should be reconsidered, and that the fifteen Indians should be released pending such consideration.

MR. CHURCHILL: I understand that the Indians referred to have been released by order of the Court of British Columbia. The Secretary of State is in correspondence with the Government of Canada on the subject of the Act, which is not one of special application to Indian Asiatics.

The Excavation of Memphis.

MR. SMEATON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Egyptian Government intend to give financial assistance to Professor Flinders Petrie in his project of excavating the ancient city of Memphis, on the Nile; and whether, in view of the fact that this is by far the greatest archæological work of recent times and likely to add greatly to our knowledge of ancient Egyptian history and civilisation, he will endeavour to obtain a promise of funds in aid of the undertaking from the British Exchequer.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir Edward Grey): With regard to the first part of the hon. Member's Question, my right hon. friend has received no report on this subject from His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Cairo, but will ask for one. In view of the many more pressing calls upon the Exchequer, my right hon. friend cannot promise to recommend compliance with the hon. Member's suggestion.

Brereton Colliery Disaster.

MR. ALBERT STANLEY (Staffordshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can say what present means are being taken to recover the bodies of the workmen entombed in the Coppice Pit of the Brereton Collieries, Rugeley.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I am informed that up to the present the efforts of the management have had to be directed to preventing the water from flooding the main workings of the colliery. No steps have been taken, so far, to unwater the submerged dip workings where the bodies lie, and no decision, I understand, has yet been come to by the owners on the subject. It is to be feared that in any case the work of unwatering the workings would be long and difficult. The feeder of water has decreased in volume but is still flowing through the submerged workings at the rate of 500 gallons per minute. As I said before, if no inquest can be held I think a special inquiry will be desirable.

MR. ALBERT STANLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the inquiry will be held?

MR. GLADSTONE: No, Sir; but I should say the sooner the better.

Railway Dock Labourers and the Conciliation Boards.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether workmen regularly employed at a weekly wage by railway companies as dock goods workers or cargo men are excluded from the scope and operation of the Conciliation Board; if so, what are the grounds for such exclusion; and whether he will consider the desirability of arranging that conciliation should be made as wide in its application as possible to workmen directly employed by railway companies with a view to the prevention of industrial conflicts and the consequent dislocation of traffic.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The workmen alluded to have not been included by any of the companies in their schemes at the outset. Some of them belong to Dockers' Unions, and neither Dockers' Unions, nor Unions representing mechanics in shops have applied to be included, but under the provisions of the arrangement made on the 6th November any grades not included at the outset may apply to a Central Board when formed, and the Central Board may, if it thinks desirable, group them under one of the existing sections or arrange for the constitution of a new Board.

Out-of-Work Benefits in New York.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, if he can inform the House of the general practice of the trade unions and trade societies of New York in regard to allowances for out-of-work benefit.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: According to information furnished by His Majesty's Consul-General at New York, the only trade unions in New York which pay out-of-work benefit are the cigar makers, the window glass workers, and the German-American branch of the Typographical Union. The maximum allowances in the first of these cases are said to be three dollars per week for eighteen weeks to members of at least two years' standing. It is possible that there may be some other instances, but I understand that the subject of out-of-work benefits paid by trade unions has not been investigated in the United States in recent years.

*MR. R. DUNCAN: Must we infer that the great building trades in New York have no out-of-work benefit?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE was understood to reply in the affirmative.

Brussels Carpets.

MR. SMEATON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been called to the fact that so-called Brussels carpets are now largely manufactured in England and sold in the Belgian market at prices considerably lower than the prices for which the same carpets can be produced in Belgium; and whether he has any official information showing the circumstances which enable the British manufacturers to undersell the manufacturers of Belgium in their own market.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Brussels carpets have been made in this country for many years. I have no official information which would enable me to answer the last part of the Question, and if I had, it might not be politic to make it public.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): Is it not a fact that a large quantity of raw material is imported into this country, manufactured here, and re-exported to the country from which the raw material came?

[No Answer was returned.]

Cheltenham Post Office Cycle Cleaner.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a man is employed in the Post Office at Cheltenham to clean cycles and do similar work; that he works sixty-three hours a week, for which he is paid less than 4d. an hour; and that he was recently specially called on duty on Sunday to repair a cycle without payment; and whether he will look into the case and see that the man's duties and pay are revised.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I will have inquiry made at once, and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

Great Horkesley School — Conservative Meeting.

MR. LEVY LEVER (Essex, Harwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been drawn to a Conservative meeting held in the school at Great Horkesley, near Colchester, convened by invitations inscribed beer and tobacco, on which occasion beer and tobacco were gratuitously distributed; and if he will take steps, by legislation or otherwise, to put an end to the continuance of such a system.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The only school at Great Horkesley appears to be a Church of England School in unison with the National Society, the trustees of which are apparently the rector and the churchwardens, and the foundation managers of which are the rector *ex officio* and three members of the Church of England appointed by subscribers to the school. I am not at present aware of the precise provisions of the trust or the degree of responsibility which rests upon the trustees or the managers for this use of the schoolhouse with the accompanying gratuitous distribution of beer and tobacco in the interest of a political party, which is alleged to have taken place.

Education (Provision of Meals) Act.

MR. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, in cases of local education authorities of necessitous areas, within the meaning of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, failing to put the Act into operation, he will make representations to the local authorities on the matter.

MR. MCKENNA: The Board of Education are not empowered by the Provision of Meals Act to make representations to local education authorities urging them to adopt its provisions, but shortly after the passing of the Act the Board issued a circular calling the attention of local authorities to their powers under it, and to the advantages that might be obtained by exercising them.

Birch Parish—Small Holdings.

MR. LEVY LEVER: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that a notice has been issued by the parish council of Birch, near Colchester, Essex, stating that applications for small holdings in the parish of Birch must be made to the clerk of the parish council on or before 16th March, 1908; and whether, in view of the provisions of The Small Holdings Act 1907, he will take steps to prevent the issue of such notices.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flintshire; for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): The Board were not aware of the notice until their attention was directed to it by my hon. friend. They will make inquiry into the matter, and communicate the result to him.

Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Licensed Property.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for the Crewe Division, as representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whether he can state what licensed premises are at present owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and what number of such premises they have disposed of since 1904.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe): According to a reply given on March 11, 1907, the total number of public-houses in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' estates was 332. Within the last twenty years 100 fully-licensed houses in London alone have been reduced, a time limit having been given to the tenant to take effect at the end of the lease. The policy of the Commissioners is to reduce the number of licences on their properties by allowing them to lapse whenever the lease falls in, unless special circumstances and the requirements of the neighbourhood call for their renewal. Beerhouse licences are never renewed. No premises, I believe, have been disposed of since 1904.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): Are we to understand that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners regard the sale of fermented liquor as in some way wrong or immoral?

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): Is it not the case that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have found licences are injurious to the value of the surrounding property?

[No Answer was returned.]

Scottish Herring Fisheries.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if he is aware that the Clyde fishermen, who habitually use the seine trawl net when in the Clyde, are unable to use that type of net when they go elsewhere in Scotland to fish, on account of the damage it does to spawn and spawning herrings; and if he will say why the Clyde fishery district is treated differently from the other fishery districts of Scotland.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I understand my hon. friend's information is not quite accurate; the seine net can be used in the capture of herrings, without any interference, all round the Scottish coasts except on the Ballantrae Banks and the adjacent waters covered by the Fishery Board's byelaw and in Loch Gruinart, Islay, where the employment of the net is also prohibited by a byelaw of the Board.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware it is generally considered that the use of the seine net is extremely injurious to herrings during the spawning season?

MR. SINCLAIR: I cannot answer that without notice, but I do not think my information bears out that statement.

MR. WATT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware 1,200 boxes of herrings were sold the other day at 3s. per box, and is this not a case of killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

MR. R. DUNCAN asked if the Fishery Board did not give as a reason for inaction that the practical difficulties of enforcing the desired restrictions were too great, although they quite admitted that they were wanted for permanent success.

MR. SINCLAIR replied that it was not so.

Crofter Legislation.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the Lords, when rejecting the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, indicated that they were prepared to co-operate in securing land legislation for the Highland crofting counties and districts where crofting conditions prevail, will the Government consider the expediency of introducing an Amendment of the Crofters Acts at the earliest possible moment with a view to the Bill becoming law this session, especially having regard to the land hunger and distress in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am not able to make any statement at present on this subject.

MR. WEIR: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that every Cabinet Minister who has dealt with this question is pledged to the hilt to advance legislation for the Highland and crofting counties?

MR. SINCLAIR made no reply.

MR. WEIR: What! No reply? I am not surprised.

Stirling Crown Lands.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any decision has yet been arrived at with regard to the application for ten five-acre small holdings on the Crown lands at Stirling adjoining Stirling Castle.

MR. SINCLAIR: This Question should, I think, be addressed to the Treasury as representing the Woods and Forests Department.

Returns of Cattle Drives in Ireland.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the practice to exclude from the Returns of Agrarian Crimes cases of cattle-driving in which it has come to the knowledge of the police, either from their own personal observations or as the result of investigations made by them, that three or more persons were engaged in the drivings, and that they were accompanied by circumstances of terror sufficient to constitute an unlawful assembly, but in which cases it has been found impracticable to institute proceedings for the indictable offence owing to the inability of the police to identify the offenders or the unwillingness of herds or other persons to give evidence; and, if so, what was the number of such cases excluded from the statistics of agrarian crime in the year 1907.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the constabulary authorities have considered the question of recording under the heading "intimidation" cases of cattle-driving which, for technical reasons, are not regarded as falling within the category of crimes known as unlawful assemblies; and, if so, what are the reasons against the adoption of the former system of record.

I beg further to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland upon what principle it has been decided to record in the statistics of crime cases of threatening notices or letters, while the great majority of cases of cattle-driving, of the genuineness of which the police are satisfied, are excluded from record in such statistics.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that no such cases as are referred to in the first of the hon. Member's Questions have been excluded from the Returns of Agrarian Crime. In reply to the second Question, offences are only recorded under the heading of intimidation when acts calculated to cause terror are committed or when personal violence is threatened. As regards the third Question, the offence of sending a threatening letter is a felony punishable by penal servitude and is therefore necessarily included in the Returns. The question whether cattle-driving is an indictable offence depends entirely upon the circumstances of the particular case. None but indictable offences are included in the Returns of Agrarian Crime.

Cavan Magistracy.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many magistrates have been appointed in East and West Cavan, respectively, on the recommendation of His Majesty's present Lieutenant of the county; is he aware that some of the appointments are contrary to the wishes of the people; and will he make representations to the Lieutenant of the county, with a view to having appointments made which would secure, as far as possible, that the majority of the people have at any rate an equal representation on the bench with the minority.

MR. BIRRELL: The Lord Chancellor informs me that the numbers of magistrates who have been appointed in East and West Cavan upon the recommendation of the present Lieutenant of the county are five and six, respectively, and of the eleven so appointed eight are Roman Catholics and three are Protestants. The Lord Chancellor has no reason to believe that any of the appointments are unpopular, and he does not think it necessary to make any representations on the subject to His Majesty's Lieutenant.

Irish Intermediate Schools.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the enforcement of a University standard on intermediate schools in Ireland in contravention of the Education Act, and to the effect of setting such difficult papers upon the practice of cramming; and whether steps will be taken by the Board to modify the mathematical examination papers in future.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Intermediate Education Board inform me that they have not used the term University standard as descriptive of the quality of their examinations. It may be that some of their advanced examinations are more difficult than the initial examinations of certain Universities, but this would not be a contravention of the Intermediate Education Act. That the standard of their examination papers generally is not too high is, they say, evidenced by the fact that in the intermediate examinations of 1907 the percentage of passes in the various grades averaged over fifty-seven.

Teachers *v.* Mathematical Tests.

Mr. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a petition for a modification of mathematical tests has been presented on behalf of a section of the teachers to the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland; whether he is aware that identical questions set to students for mathematical honours in Dublin University have appeared in the examination papers for junior grade intermediate pupils; and that to 90 per cent. of middle and senior grade intermediate pupils mathematical tests of a practically impossible character have been applied; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any, and if any, what, action in the matter.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Intermediate Education Board have from time to time received petitions with regard to the alleged difficulty of their examination papers, but more frequently as to subjects other than mathematics. The Board are not aware that identical questions have been set in Dublin University mathematical honour examinations and intermediate examinations. In the intermediate examinations of 1907, the percentage of senior grade students who passed in the different mathematical subjects ranged from seventy-seven to ninety, and the percentage of middle grade students who passed in those subjects ranged from sixty-six to eighty-five. These figures completely dispose of the suggestion that to 90 per cent. of such pupils, the mathematical tests are practically impossible. The standard of examination is a matter within the discretion of the Board.

Royal Irish Constabulary Regulations.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Sergeant Molloy, Royal Irish Constabulary, Kilmalogue, Portarlington, is married to a woman from the town whose friends reside in the street in which the police barrack is situated, can he say whether this is in conformity with the constabulary regulations; and, if not, what course he proposes taking.

Mr. BIRRELL: Sergeant Molloy is married to a native of Queen's County, and his wife has no relatives or connections in King's County, in which the sergeant is serving, except one distant connection. The Inspector-General informs me that it is not contrary to regulations for the sergeant to remain at his present station.

Land Purchase in Kerry.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the total purchase price and total cost of improvements of all estates purchased by the Congested Districts Board before the passing of the Act of 1903 for all congested Ireland, and for congested Kerry, respectively; and what are the corresponding figures since the passing of the Act of 1903.

Mr. BIRRELL: The total purchase price of estates bought by the Congested Districts Board prior to the Act of 1903 is, in congested districts generally, £557,685; and in county Kerry, £3,893. The total cost of improvement works on those estates is, in congested districts generally, £181,823, and in County Kerry, £161. The total purchase price of estates bought by the Congested Districts Board since the Act of 1903 is, in congested districts generally, £1,417,432, and in County Kerry, £143,132. The total cost of improvement works on those estates is, in congested districts generally, £274,668; and in County Kerry, £19,449.

Irish Fish Exports.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the value of fish exported from Ireland, caught by Irish boats, and imported into Ireland in the year 1907; what are the corresponding figures for Scotland; and whether any steps have been taken by the Congested Districts Board or the Department of Agriculture to secure, by co-operation among the various fishing ports or otherwise, that a regular supply of Irish fish would be available to meet the demands of those districts in Ireland that now have to import their fish, at considerable cost, from foreign ports.

MR. BIRRELL: The statistics as to the Irish exports and imports of fish for 1907 are not yet available. I have no information as to the figures for Scotland. The Department of Agriculture have made extensive inquiries as to the best means of securing that fish for Irish consumption should be supplied from Irish sources, and of developing additional markets in Ireland for fish taken at home. The question is beset with difficulties which it has not yet been possible to overcome, the chief difficulty being that the large distributing markets are better able than small Irish fishing ports to send an unfailing supply to the small dealers in many parts of Ireland. The Department, however, are pursuing their inquiries in the matter, and will do their best to bring about the desired end.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL suggested that a number of ports might combine for the purpose of sending fish away.

Superannuation Regulations.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the case of the Reverend T. Long, late Church of Ireland chaplain of the North Dublin Union, to whom the board of guardians have awarded a superannuation allowance on his retirement from office, but to which allowance the Local Government Board has declined to give its sanction on the ground that the reverend gentleman had not devoted his whole time to the service of the guardians; whether he is aware that, prior to 1905, Mr. Long had held the chaplaincy of the House of Industry Hospital, Dublin, and that, although he was qualified by length of service to a pension in respect of this appointment, the sanction of the late Lord-Lieutenant was refused for a similar reason, but that subsequently, on re-investigation by the right honourable Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, as Chief Secretary, it was held, on the advice of his Law Officers, that the latter pension was legally payable and was accordingly granted; and whether he will examine the facts connected with the two cases mentioned, and take the opinion of the present Law Officers as to the action of the Local Government Board on the question of the validity of the award of a pension to Mr. Long by the North Dublin Guardians.

MR. BIRRELL: Section 1 of the Union Officers (Ireland) Superannuation Act, 1865, provides that a superannuation allowance can only be given to an officer whose whole time has been devoted to the service of the union. While the Reverend Mr. Long was chaplain of the workhouse of the North Dublin Union, he was also rector of the parish of St. Michan's, and therefore he cannot possibly be held to have devoted his whole time to the service of the union. The statute is most explicit, and no necessity arises for taking the opinion of the Law Officers upon its construction. Mr. Long received a pension as chaplain to the House of Industry Hospital under the Act relating to the hospital. In that case there is no condition that officers must have devoted their whole time to the service.

The Glenahiery Explosion.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, in declining to produce the report of County Inspector Jennings, at the recent hearing, before Mr. Justice Kenny, at the Waterford Assizes, of the appeal in Lord Ashtown's case, was acting under instructions; and whether he will state the date of the report of County

Inspector Jennings and the date at which this report was received by the Inspector-General in Dublin Castle.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if District Inspector Preston made no report or other communication to the authorities in respect of the outrage at Glenahiery from his arrival on the 17th August to the 7th September, or if the contrary is the fact; when were such reports or communications prior to the 7th September received; and whether they are still in existence.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that on the first publication of District Inspector Preston's report regarding the Glenahiery outrage, it was suggested that Lord Ashtown was responsible for, or privy to, the outrages on his own premises, and that since that date the White Paper laid upon the Table proves that the report in question was not directly drawn up by District Inspector Preston, he will state who of the various Dublin Castle officials who amended Inspector Preston's report was responsible for the suggestion that Lord Ashtown had committed the outrage himself; and whether he can state if the Inspector-General of Constabulary was himself present at all the meetings in the Castle when this report was being prepared for official publication.

MR. LONSDALE: May I also ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he can now give an explanation of the course adopted by the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary in refusing to produce in Court at Waterford, in the matter of Lord Ashtown's claim, the original report of District Inspector Preston, which the Government had instructed him to produce.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): There are four Questions on this subject, one of which is addressed to myself. As my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary is less familiar with the facts than I am, he has asked me to answer all the Questions. I will first answer the Question addressed to myself.

The Inspector-General, in accordance with the usual practice, claims privilege for all police documents connected with the case. He informs me that during the subsequent proceedings in Court the advice which he had received from the Government some days previously to the effect that he was at liberty, if the occasion should require, to produce District Inspector Preston's original report, was not present to his mind.

In reply to the first Question of the hon. Member for Mid-Armagh, the Inspector-General, in claiming privilege for County Inspector Jennings' reports, was not acting under instructions, but in accordance with the usual practice. The first report of County Inspector Jennings in which he expressed dissent from the conclusions of District Inspector Preston, was a report dated 14th September and received by the Inspector-General on 16th September. Mr. Jennings was at once directed to communicate to the parties his statement indicating dissent from District Inspector Preston, and this he did by letter on the 18th September. Mr. Jennings had previously forwarded to the Inspector-General, without any expression of dissent, a report of the District Inspector dated 18th August in which the latter first stated the conclusions arrived at by him as to the window and door being open at the time of the explosion.

In reply to the Question of the hon. Member for North Armagh, there were frequent communications between District Inspector Preston and the Inspector-General between 17th August and 7th September, several of them were by telegraph in cipher, and some were by personal interviews. This is the usual practice when local police are investigating the circumstances of crime or alleged crime. But no formal and complete report of the entire circumstances of the case was sent until the 7th September. I cannot give the dates of all these communications. They are all still in existence, except the original cipher telegrams which, in accordance with official practice, were destroyed after being deciphered.

The statements in the Question of the hon. and gallant Member for East Down as to the report of District Inspector Preston are absolutely inaccurate. The hon. and gallant Member either did not hear, or did not grasp the full meaning of the statements made by my right hon. friend and by me on the 11th instant. It is sufficient for me now to repeat that no report of District Inspector Preston was published by the Government until the issue of the White Paper. No report of his was altered or amended by any official of Dublin Castle. As my right hon. friend has stated, the Inspector-General was present at the interviews between the Law Officers, the Under-Secretary, and Mr. Preston, but no report was prepared at those interviews. The report, as already stated, was prepared by Mr. Preston alone.

MR. LONSDALE: Are the instructions given to the Inspector-General with regard to the production of documents in writing?

MR. CHERRY: They were given by telegraph by me.

MR. LONSDALE: Will the right hon. Gentleman lay a copy of the telegram on the Table.

MR. CHERRY: No, Sir, I cannot undertake to do so.

MR. LONSDALE: Did the instructions of the right hon. Gentleman himself given to the Inspector-General to produce documents include the report of County Inspector Jennings?

*MR. CHERRY: No, Sir; the instruction referred only to Inspector Preston's report.

MR. LONSDALE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say why the Inspector-General declined to produce the report of County Inspector Jennings when it was called for by Lord Ashtown's counsel?

*MR. CHERRY: I have already explained that the Inspector-General stated that he claimed privilege for County Inspector Jenning's report. In doing so he was not acting under instructions but in accordance with the usual practice.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Is it not a fact that in the course of examination on the appeal case District Inspector Preston admitted under oath that he set his signature to a report the inference in which he admitted was incorrect, and had no foundation in fact?

*MR. CHERRY: I was not present in Court during the case. The right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, the Member for Dublin University, was present and is far better able to answer the Question than I am.

MR. LONSDALE: When was the first report received from County Inspector Jennings?

*MR. CHERRY: The only report of which I am aware was received on September 16th.

MR. LONSDALE rose to put a further Question when Mr. Speaker observed that the hon. Member had already asked several Questions, and suggested that notice should be given.

Marshall Estate, County Kerry.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Marshall estate, county Kerry, sold some years ago under Section 6 of the 1903 Purchase Act, has yet been valued; whether the valuation has been communicated to the landlord; and, if so, what is the cause of the delay in completing the purchase.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Member is in error in supposing that the estate in question has been sold. The Estates Commissioners have had it inspected, but have not yet communicated to the owner the estimated price which they are prepared to offer. In dealing with the case, the Commissioners are obliged to have regard to the priority of other cases in which proceedings were commenced at an earlier date.

The Irish Language in Irish Schools

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of schools in which Irish was taught within school hours, the number of pupils to whom it was taught, the average time given per week, and the payment made to the teachers for this work during the year 1907; and the number of schools in which Irish was taught outside school hours, the number of pupils engaged, the average time given per week, and the payment made to the teachers during the same year for this work.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the preparation of a Return containing the information asked for in the Question will be a difficult matter, and will take at least a month. I will communicate the facts to the hon. Member as soon as the Commissioners can furnish me with them.

*Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) asked what percentage of the Irish people habitually used the old Celtic language, and how this compared with the percentage in Scotland habitually using Gaelic.

Mr. BIRRELL replied that he had nothing to do with what was taught in Scottish schools.

Cavan Evicted Tenants.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether any steps have yet been taken to put in force the compulsory powers of The Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, in County Cavan; how many evicted tenants are to be reinstated, and how many have been reinstated since the Land Act of 1903 in County Cavan; and will he say if County Cavan is receiving exceptional treatment in the working of this Act.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have not yet exercised the compulsory powers of the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, in any case in County Cavan. Forty-five evicted tenants in that county have already been reinstated or provided with new holdings, and the Commissioners have recorded sixty-one applicants as suitable to receive holdings if such can be provided for them. No exceptional treatment has been given by the Estates Commissioners to County Cavan.

Irish Congested Districts Board.

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he is aware of the widespead dissatisfaction caused in the congested districts by the announcement of the projected suspension of the work of the parish committees for want of funds; and if he can now say what provision the Government propose to make in order to secure a continuance of of the work.

Mr. BIRRELL: In my Answer to Questions put by the hon. Member for East Mayo on the 4th instant, I made a very full statement as to the funds of the Congested Districts Board, and explained the reasons why the Board have, to their great regret, been obliged to decide upon the suspension of parish committee grants in the coming financial year. I am afraid that I can add nothing to that Answer.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, how soon the promised Report as to the operations under the Evicted Tenants Act of last session will be ready.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Return under Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants Act is at present in the hands of the printer, and the Estates Commissioners hope to have it ready for presentation before the end of the month.

Irish University Education.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can now state the date on which the Government intend to introduce their State-aided Roman Catholic University Bill; and if any arrangement has been come to as to the moving of the Home Rule Resolution.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am unable to recognise in the description given by the hon. and gallant Member any measure which I am likely to introduce, but if he refers, as I presume he does, to the Bill to improve and extend University education in Ireland which was alluded to in the King's Speech, I hope to introduce that Bill during the week beginning on 30th instant. The latter part of the Question should not be addressed to me, but I am informed that the Resolution will be moved on 30th instant.

Tralee Cattle Drive.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a cattle drive took place off the Cragg and Ardcrome farms, Tralee, county Kerry, on Sunday, the 8th March last, during the absence of the caretaker and his police escort at mass; whether all the cattle have been recovered; whether any arrests have been made in connection with the outrage; and, if so, what sentences were imposed; and could he give any information as to the reason for cattle being driven off these farms.

MR. BIRRELL: The fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. All the cattle except two have been recovered. The police arrested five persons and applied that they should be bound over to keep the peace. One was discharged for want of identification, and four were required to find bail. Two of the four gave bail, and the other two were committed to prison for two months in default of giving bail. I cannot say why the cattle were driven off the farms.

Union Jack over Irish Schools.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will say if there is any Departmental objection to the Union Jack being hoisted over national schools in Ireland where a general desire is expressed for such outward sign of loyalty, and where the manager raises no objection.

MR. BIRRELL: Before taking any steps in this matter, I must be supplied with better evidence than I possess to satisfy me that the hoisting of the Union Jack over national schools in Ireland would promote the peace, harmony, and loyalty of the neighbourhood.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: May I ask in all sincerity whether in those parts of the country where the people are unanimously loyal——

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS on the NATIONALIST Benches: Where are they?

CAPTAIN CRAIG: In Ulster. Is there any objection to hoisting Union Jacks, a large number of which have been supplied for that purpose?

MR. BIRRELL: I should be very glad to be supplied with evidence as to complete unanimity existing in any part of Ireland. I have no desire whatever to interfere with the wishes of the Department.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I press for an Answer. Where there is a unanimous desire on the part of the children, their parents, and the managers, is there any objection to the flying of the Union Jack?

MR. BIRRELL: Where complete unanimity exists in the neighbourhood the flying of the Union Jack is an excellent thing, but I do not wish it to become a centre of dissension.

Waterford Assizes—Case of Nicholas Quinlan.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland on what grounds the trial of Nicholas Quinlan, who was charged with forging a ballot paper while acting as presiding officer at a municipal election, was adjourned at the Waterford assizes; and why did he not send up a bill to the grand jury.

MR. CHERRY: The trial referred to in the Question was postponed on my application for reasons which I do not think it, in the public interest, advisable now to state. It is my intention to proceed with the case at the next Waterford assizes.

London and North Western Railway and Kingston Harbour Dues.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is intended to allow the steamers of the London and North Western Company to make use of Kingston Harbour without charge; and, if not, what charge will be made.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The London and North Western Company will be charged the same dues as other companies using the pier for like purposes.

MR. CLANCY: Will it be more or less than the Dublin company?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I cannot say without notice.

MR. CLANCY: Is it to be a merely nominal charge?

MR. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir. It will be exactly the same charge as is made to other steamers.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of any case where the charge is made at all? Is it not a fact that no such charge has been made before for the use of a royal pier?

MR. RUNICIMAN: We have been charging dues to the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company ever since we made the pier, and we shall charge dues to the London North Western Company on exactly the same scale.

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

MR. MCCRAE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he is aware that the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill has been rejected on Second Reading in the House of Lords; and if he can state what steps the Government intend to take in the matter.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I am not in a position to make any statement.

MR. MCCRAE: Would it not be possible to have a conference between the two Houses, as suggested in the Resolution of this House passed last year?

MR. ASQUITH: Perhaps my hon. friend will give notice of that Question. I am not very sanguine as to the result of such a conference.

MR. PIRIE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when he will be able to make a statement?

MR. ASQUITH: No, I cannot.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked in what order the Votes would be taked the next day.

MR. ASQUITH: First the Navy Votes 10 and 1, and then the Army Votes A.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought there was a private understanding between my right hon. friend the Member for the Wellington Division of Somerset, and the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury that Vote 10 of the Navy should be taken first, and that Vote 1 should be postponed till after the Army Vote A.

MR. ASQUITH: If the right hon. Gentleman prefers that, it can be done.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Timothy Davies and Mr. Walker; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Benn and Mr. Acland.

Report to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS AND REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (IRELAND) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 92.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 92.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 160.]

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY COUNCILS) BILL.

Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 93.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 93.]

Bill to be taken into consideration upon Monday next.

NEW BILLS.

IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS (HEATING) BILL.

"To provide for the Heating of National School Houses in Ireland," presented by Captain Craig; supported by Colonel M'Calmont, Mr. Lonsdale, Mr. Moore, Mr. Thomas Corbett, Mr. Charles Craig, and Mr. Barrie; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 161.]

TRUST INVESTMENT BILL.

"To amend the Law as to the Investment of Trust Funds," presented by Mr. Harmood-Banner; supported by Mr. Armitage and Mr. Scott; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 162.]

PHARMACY BILL

"To amend the Pharmacy Acts," presented by Mr. Winfrey; supported by Mr. Idris, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Crooks, Mr. Vickerman Rutherford, and Mr. Ellis Griffith; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 163.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion when the Business is postponed this day, be resumed and proceeded with, though opposed, after the interrupton of the Business."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided: Ayes, 302; Noes. 75. (Division List No. 46).

AYES.

Abraham, Wm. (Cork, N.E.)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John

Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, H.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. Notts, (Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, Sir G Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seely, Colonel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt Hn. Hugh O.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frenerick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)

Craik, Sir Henry
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Doughty, Sir George
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gibbs, J. A. (Bristol, West)
Glover, Thomas
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Hill, Sir Clement
Hunt, Rowland
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Seddon, J.
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

SUPPLY [16th March] REPORT.

Resolution reported:

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

(Vote on Account).

"That a sum, not exceeding £21,805,000, be granted to His Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, viz.:—

CIVIL SERVICES.

Class II.

	£
Board of Agriculture and Fisheries	65,000

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Post Office	6,500,000

CIVIL SERVICES.

Class II.

Ireland:—

Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction	95,000

Class I.

	£
Royal Palaces	20,000
Osborne	5,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens	52,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings	18,000
Salisbury Memorial	1,000
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain	30,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain	25,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings	40,000
Revenue Buildings	250,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain	230,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom	90,000
Harbours under the Board of Trade	20,000
Peterhead Harbour	10,000
Rates on Government Property	300,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland	95,000
Railways, Ireland	30,000

Class II.

United Kingdom and England:—

House of Lords Offices	10,000
House of Commons Offices	20,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments	40,000
Home Office	75,000
Foreign Office	24,000
Colonial Office	25,000
Privy Council Office	5,000
Board of Trade	100,000
Mercantile Marine Services	25,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Charity Commission	15,000
Civil Service Commission	17,000
Exchequer and Audit Department	25,000
Friendly Societies Registry	3,000
Local Government Board	85,000
Lunacy Commission	5,000
Mint (including Coinage)	5
National Debt Office	6,000
Public Record Office	10,000
Public Works Loan Commission	1,200
Registrar General's Office	15,000
Stationery and Printing	330,000

	£
Woods, Forests, &c., Office of	8,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	36,000
Secret Service . . .	40,000

Scotland—

Secretary for Scotland, Office of	25,000
Fishery Board . . .	7,000
Lunacy Commission . .	2,500
Registrar General's Office .	1,500
Local Government Board .	5,000

Ireland—

Lord Lieutenant's Household	2,000
Chief Secretary's Offices and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office . .	1,000
Local Government Board .	30,000
Public Record Office . .	2,000
Public Works Office . .	16,000
Registrar General's Office .	5,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey	7,000

Class III.

United Kingdom and England—

Law Charges . . .	30,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses	28,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	150,000
Land Registry . . .	16,000
Public Trustee . . .	1,000
County Courts . . .	2
Police, England and Wales	15,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies	320,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britian .	130,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	15,000

Scotland—

Law Charges and Courts of Law	30,000
Register House, Edinburgh .	15,000
Crofters Commission . .	2,000
Prisons	35,000

Ireland—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions . . .	25,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	43,000
Land Commission . .	110,000
County Court Officers, &c. .	40,000

	£
Dublin Metropolitan Police .	60,000
Royal Irish Constabulary .	615,000
Prisons	50,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	55,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	4,000

Class IV.

United Kingdom and England—

Board of Education . .	7,000,000
British Museum . . .	60,000
National Gallery . . .	17,000
National Portrait Gallery .	3,000
Wallace Collection . .	3,000
Scientific Investigations, &c.	28,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain, and Intermediate Education, Wales	75,000

Scotland—

Public Education . . .	850,000
National Galleries . .	3,000

Ireland—

Public Education . .	760,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners	400
National Gallery . . .	2,000
Queen's Colleges . . .	2,500

Class V.

Diplomatic and Consular Services	250,000
Colonial Services . . .	350,000
Telegraph Subsidies and Pacific Cable . . .	25,000
Cyprus (Grant in Aid) .	49,000

Class VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	300,000
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances . .	1,150
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland	17,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiencies .	—

Class VII.

Temporary Commissions .	25,000
Miscellaneous Expenses .	4,740
Repayments of the Local Loans Fund . . .	—
Ireland Development Grant	100,000

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

	£
Customs	350,000
Inland Revenue	830,000
Total for Civil Services and Revenue Departments	£21,805,000"

Resolution read a Second time.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to move a reduction of £100 on this Vote for the purpose of drawing the attention of the House to a very serious state of things that has arisen in Ireland, owing to the intervention of the Treasury, which has brought the operations of the Congested Districts Board to an absolute standstill. I wish at the outset to explain that what the Treasury has done is that they have not refused or withheld from the Congested Districts Board the money necessary to continue the purchase of estates, but they have refused to give any additional funds to the Congested Districts Board, which are necessary for preparing the estates for sale. As a consequence of that refusal the Treasury have taken steps, if I am rightly informed, to direct the Congested Districts Board, or to bring pressure upon the Board, absolutely to cease the purchase of estates. The condition of things which has been caused by this action on the part of the Treasury is grave in the extreme. Before I proceed to explain in detail the actual situation which has now arisen in Ireland in consequence of this action, I feel bound to explain the procedure of the Board and the way in which this action on the part of the Treasury has brought that procedure to an absolute standstill. The Congested Districts Board, as many Members who were in Parliament before the last election know, was set up by two clauses in the Land Act of 1891. Those two clauses set up a body with practically a roving commission to see what could be done for those unfortunate districts in the South and West of Ireland. The powers given by those two clauses were vague in the extreme and exceedingly limited. The commission conferred upon this body was to endeavour to ameliorate the condition of this population, which was recognised by Parliament as being disgraceful to the whole civilisation of the country. That Act has been made the subject of innumerable Amendments. I counted up the other day, and I think there have been no less than nine amending Acts. If this were the proper occasion to discuss the question in its larger issues and to deal with questions of legislation, I could unfold to the House a story of the history of the amending legislation of this Congested Districts Board, which would be a very striking illustration of the incapacity of this House to deal with Irish problems. But this is not the time to do that. We are now confined strictly to the question of administration. The Board at first applied itself to various experiments with a view to promoting various industries amongst those populations. It made various experiments and made a great many mistakes, and I am free to admit that it wasted a great deal of money on those experiments, but the Nationalist Party to which I belong said from the beginning that these experiments were, to say the least, of very little use, and that the true policy for the Board and the only policy which could bring a lasting and effective remedy for the terrible conditions which prevailed in the West of Ireland was the policy of enlarging the holdings of the people and improving the conditions of the tenure so that they might become a self-supporting population. These views which have been advocated both in this House and outside for many years were at last adopted by the Government of the day, and in 1899 the Board, by the purchase of the Dillon estate, commenced for the first time the policy of migration, enlargement of holdings, and the improvement of land—the only policy which, in my opinion, is calculated in any degree to improve the condition of these western populations. Therefore, I ask hon. Members to keep in mind when they hear the operations of the Board criticised, that this land policy of the Board has only been in operation from 1899. As regards the Congested Districts Board, I wish to say at the very outset that it has been bitterly criticised in many quarters. If I were disposed to-night to embark on a criticism of the Board I could make a very strong case against them. They have made many mistakes and have wasted money on experiments, and in my opinion have very often paid a great deal too much for land. In many ways I could criticise them, but when all the criticism is said and done, the fact remains, which I do not think can be challenged, that this Board is the only public body we have had in Ireland which has applied itself to this great problem—one of the most urgent and burning we have to deal with in that country—the problem of the condition of these western populations. It has left behind it in the districts in which its limited opportunities—owing to the insufficiency of the Acts and insufficiency of its funds—have enabled it to operate permanent works of improvement. It is a matter of notoriety that in these, I regret to say extremely limited districts, where it has been able to operate with more or less of a free hand, as in the case of the Dillon estate and others in that neighbourhood, centres of disturbance and outrage and trouble of every kind have become peaceful centres of industry and progress. However open the Board may be to criticism, and I am the last man to deny that it can be truthfully and severely criticised, we in Ireland have had too little of genuine work done for those unfortunate and neglected people to look a gift horse too closely in the mouth and to refuse the ameliorative operations of this Board until we have something better to put in its place. The case I hope to make to-night for unloosing the strings of the Treasury to a very limited extent is unanswerable. There is one recent criticism made of the Board to which I feel bound to advert for a moment, because a recent hon. Member of this House—a man of extreme brilliancy—has within the last two months actually written a whole volume devoted solely to a denunciation of this Congested Districts Board. The volume is full of charges against the Board. It is written by Mr. O'Donnell. I only refer to that for a moment, fearing that any man might be prejudiced against the Board by charges made against it. I take one of the charges. It is a charge in connection with the Dillon estate. In this charge it is said that an offer of £11,000 was made for the demesne of the Dillon estate, with the sporting rights attached, and that that offer was refused in order that the land might be sold for £2,500 to a community of foreign nuns, and that therefore a loss of £8,000 was inflicted on the taxpayer in order to give a preference to the nuns. What are the facts? They are exceedingly simple. I mention this case in order to disarm prejudice against the Board. It is quite true that the Congested Districts Board was offered by a sporting tenant £11,000 for the demesne of the Dillon estate, together with the shooting rights over the estate and over two or three large plantations on the estate. The area of the demesne is 653 acres, including a great deal of agricultural land. The tenants on the estate resisted the reservation of the shooting rights and in that, I think, they were perfectly right. I had something to do with that agitation. It was hinted that the agitation was got up by the priests in the interest of these nuns. There is not a shadow of foundation in that. I advised the tenants not to consent to the reservation of the shooting rights. When the tenants refused to consent to that reservation the sporting tenant, of course, was no longer available. What happened? The Board then having this tumble-down mansion on their hands sold it to the Bishop of Elphin for this community of nuns with 150 acres of the demesne for the sum of £2,100, but they reserved the balance of the demesne, amounting to 450 acres, which they cut up and distributed among small tenants, thereby enlarging a great number of small holdings, and they realised out of the demesne £13,500 by the new arrangement, reserving to themselves the three large plantations which, under the other offer, would have been the sporting tenant's. Now the House has the facts of the case, showing how easy any false charge can be made against a body. I mention that to show how easy it is to trump up a charge which looks very bad and is calculated to prejudice opinion in this country against a board in Ireland, and to show how, when investigated, it may disappear altogether. It is easy to criticise this Board, but that is not what I have risen for to-night. What I want to say is that this Board is the only body in Ireland at present with any machinery for dealing with such estates as the Dillon estate and others of that character, and that until some other body, or other machinery is set up by the wisdom of Parliament, and until we receive and consider the Report of the Dudley Commission, I think it is an act of political insanity to block and to stop the operations of this Board. I do not desire for myself, or for any member of the Party to which I belong, to say one word to-night to prejudice our freedom of action when the Report of the Dudley Commission comes forward. We wish to leave ourselves absolutely free to advocate any course which may seem good to us as regards the future treatment of these congested districts, but pending that Report it is only sound statesmanship that the operations of the present Board, which was set up by Parliament for the treatment of the congested districts, and is the only body competent to deal with these estates, should not be suspended, especially in view of the dangerous consequences which may result, thereby raising fresh obstacles in the way of the right hon. Gentleman when he comes to deal with the question later on and also in view of the promises which were made five years ago as to the Congested Districts Board and the treatment of these districts. One word as regards those promises. My hon. friends who sit around me will remember the debates which took place in 1903. We remember the promises which were made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover. I distinctly remember the promise made by him when the condition of the congested districts was pressed on his attention. In the two years which followed the debates of 1903, the right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to carry out the promise. He said that it was the intention of the Government to give up nibbling at this question, and to embark on a policy by buying up a large number of estates. And the right hon. Gentleman said this remarkable thing: That he regarded these small holdings in the West of Ireland as uneconomic—to used the technical expression then employed—and that they ought not to be sold to the people until they had been made economic. That was a perfectly sound principle. What do we see in the wilds of Leitrim? Estates sold at an outrageous price, together with arrears. I say that the money of the State is most insecure under these conditions. The right hon. Member for Dover was perfectly right whether we look at it from the view of the future fate of these poor people, from the point of view of the future prosperity of the country, or from the point of view of those who represent the taxpayers of this country, who want security for the funds advanced for purchase of the estates. The right hon. Member for Dover said rightly that he was not going to lend this money in order to stereotype a condition of raggedness and rottenness. Therefore I am entitled to say that the speech delivered by the right hon. the Member for Dover on that occasion, and the whole course of the debates in 1903, raised in the minds of the Irish people and particularly those in the West of Ireland great hopes, and you cannot in this House raise great hopes amongst the people without contracting a deep moral obligation to see that they are not disappointed. If there is one thing more than another which this House ought to be ashamed of, it is that over and over again it has said to Ireland: "Be peaceable and everything will be done." But when Ireland is peaceable, nothing is done, and then follows from disappointment, outrage and violence. What is the procedure adopted by the Congested Districts Board ever since it commenced its policy of land settlement? The Board buys an estate and endeavours to put it in order and to improve its condition, partly by enlarging the holdings, partly by making roads, and partly by constructing a system of drainage. The holdings are made economic, at all events they are put into such a condition that people can make a living out of the land. Then the estate is charged with a small proportion of the expense of these improvements. That proportion up to the present time has been very small, spread over the whole estate. Here let me say what ought to be kept in mind by hon. Members, that in Ireland there is grazing land which might be used in bringing these holdings up to an economic standard at a minimum rent of £10. From my own observation I have been convinced that there are thousands of holdings which, without any addition that might be taken from the grazing land, can be made more economic than they are by encouraging the people to drain their land. I know a large numer of people whose holdings have been vastly improved and who are becoming prosperous simply because, where the landlords have been bought out and after the main drainage has been executed, they have reclaimed the land with great industry. They are encouraged to do so, because they have the assurance for the first time in their history, given by the scheme of land purchase, that all the value given to the reclaimed land by their labour and industry will be their own instead of being appropriated by the landlord. I remember the time when these poor people went out on their holdings and reclaimed the land from bog or morass only to find that the rent was raised upon them by 10s. an acre. Now you can see hundreds of them working at the reclamation of their land. By encouragements of that kind incalculable good may be done all over Ireland. I have the figures here of a few estates. One estate cost £39,000 and after certain things had been done to it which gave it an enhanced value, was sold to the tenants at £40,200, although that enhanced value was paid for more by the tenants than by the Board. The Board expended £3,550 on improvements and a portion of that money was paid by the tenants themselves. Sometimes it takes two or three years to carry out these operations, because of their complexity and difficulty. Then the Board charges a rent to the tenant, but has only to pay interest to the Land Commission and the balance is all spent on improvements. I have seen myself the changes which have been made when the rents are spent on improvements instead of the money being sent away to an absentee landlord. Take the case of the Dillon Estate, which was bought by the Board and kept in hand for four years. They spent £65,000 on improvements, and then sold it to the tenants at a reduction of 40 per cent. after the lapse of four years—all without the cost of a single penny to the Government. Some people say that that is rather hard on the tenants, but the estate was purchased at fifteen years' purchase which could not be done now. While that is true what a difference it made on the Dillon Estate! The expenditure of £65,000 quite transformed the whole estate, on which for fifty or sixty years not £50 had been spent. Therefore the method adopted by the Congested Districts Board is to buy the estate, then execute these improvements and re-sell to the tenants, doing what they can by migration, by enlargement of the holdings and other means to put the tenants in a more economic condition and in a better position to make a living out of their land. One of the awful evils with which the country is threatened is that some of the tenants on these estates are being forced to buy direct from the landlord by the pressure of arrears. The most tragic feature of the situation is that those tenants who need most the intervention of the Congested Districts Board are the most defenceless and the most easily forced to buy their land direct from the landlord, without the intervention of the Congested Districts Board, and their condition of misery is increased. It is impossible for any Government body to undo the mischief that has been done in this way, because when proprietary rights are once set up in these small holdings it will be a matter of infinite complexity and great expense to put them right. As I have said, this is a matter of vital interest to the taxpayers of this country, because the operations of the Board are not only laying a foundation for a better condition of things to the people but for enhancing the security of the Treasury for all the money spent on land purchase in Ireland. I said just now that it is not by migration or enlarging holdings alone that this Board has done good work. I should like hon. Members to see for themselves the change that has been effected in certain parts of the country by drainage, by roads, and by other improvements which the Board has encouraged. I remember the right hon. Member for Dover saying that it appeared to him as if some ancient system of village land tenure had petrified in the west of Ireland and had left it undeveloped. No, that is not so. These are the people who were driven off the good lands of Ireland not so very long ago.

Within the last hundred years some hundreds of them wandered from Armagh and Monaghan down into the wilds of Mayo and Galway. They were driven off their good lands and settled on the bogs and morasses of Mayo and Galway like wild animals. There you have the real secret of cattle-driving. It was then not so much cattle-driving as man and woman driving. That is the modern result of the evil law which was forced upon our country by this House and by successive Governments, and therefore there is a greater moral obligation on the House to deal with it now. In the first place, I know many villages where there are no means of access to the farms. These people have settled down neglected in the wilderness and waste places and erected miserable hovels. At first they paid no rent. The landlord never troubled to see to their movements or to regulate their settlements or to make roads or approaches to their farms, but he followed them for the rent when their farms became valuable. I can show you villages to-day near where I live, where the poverty of the people is enormously increased by the fact that they cannot get to the public roads except by donkeys. The mere work of road-making alone is immeasurably important on some of these estates. I have heard people sneer at road-making, but if you live in the county of Mayo you will not sneer at it. I was shown a beautiful road on the De Freyne estate, and the man who showed it to me said that before it was made he had frequently seen people on their donkeys which were sunk to their bellies. How could agriculture be carried on under such circumstances? I know of villages in which murders have been committed in consequence of these unfortunate villagers only being able to approach a road by passing over the land of their neighbours, and there is no more futile subject of dispute than such a condition of affairs as that. The making of a road in one of these villages is an act which immensely, nay, immeasurably increases the value of the holding. Take a case which came under my notice, in which there are about 200 acres of rich deep bog on the estate, but it was absolutely valueless, because the people could not get near it, the ground all round it being a swamp. There was no road and the only ways with which the people could get to it was by almost unpassable paths across fields and ditches. Now the Board have run a road up to the bog and the people are making more money out of it by turf cutting than they are out of their holdings, and as they cut the turf, they can reclaim the land. It is only when you live among these people that you understand the many ways in which by improvements the Board can greatly add to their means of maintaining life, even where grazing land is not available. I would say to the House that you must remember that this Board has to deal with a population the most neglected in the United Kingdom, a population who have had none of the ordinary work done for them that is done for the tenants in every other part of the United Kingdom. The landlords, or some of them in this country, and so far as I know, throughout Great Britain, do endeavour to help in some way to improve the tenancies in matters of public roads and in making the holdings habitable. That is not the case in Ireland, particularly in these poor districts, and this Board has to overtake the arrears of two centuries, so that I do not think the demands made upon it are excessive. I will read a short extract from one of the last Reports of the Board—

> "In our reports for the years 1904–5 and 1905–6, we stated that further funds were required to enable us to continue the purchase and improvement of estates on a satisfactory scale and the appointment on 20th July, 1906, of a Royal Commission to inquire into the operations of the Act dealing with congestion, the working of our Board and other matters connected with the relief of congestion, too, indirectly had the effect of partially suspending this branch of our work, as the consideration by Government of our application for increased funds was thereby postponed. The purchases we have agreed upon in each of the three past financial years show the great decrease which has taken place for the reasons stated, the figures being: Estates purchased in 1904–5, £649,544; 1905–6, £346,706; 1906–7, £108,861."

Now, mark you, for the year 1904–5, after the passing of the Act of 1903, there was an immense increase in the operations of the Board, but the moment the extra charge has been put on the Treasury they commence a system of intimidation or letter-writing to the Board, ordering them in effect to stop operations, with the result that whereas it was £649,000 in 1904–5 last year it came down to £108,000. The Report goes on to state, after saying that a further sum of money would be needed if they were to make reasonable progress—

> "The delay in the recovery of the proceedings of re-sale of the older estates above referred to had the effect of considerably reducing the sum available in the past year for the improvement of estates, and only £76,000 could be expended, out of the £108,000 estimated for the year. The receipt of the proceeds of resale of these estates in the current year will, however, enable us to provide £100,000 for improvements, postponing to a future year the expenditure of about £40,000 required to complete the preparation of 115 estates for sale to the tenants, and we can at present make no provision for the improvement of twenty-two other estates more recently purchased."

That, I think, is an extraordinary condition of things and what renders it still more extraordinary is that the necessity for further funds was brought up in two previous Reports. I take that for 1905–6—

> "Having regard to the loss which must be incurred in effecting any radical improvement in the poor tenanted properties we purchase, our present funds, after providing for the loss on estates arranged to be purchased, would not in the future enable us to meet the loss that would be inevitable to the preparation for sale of more than £140,000 worth of property in each year. The limitation of the Board's operations to the annual purchase of estates of the value of not more than £140,000 will prolong indefinitely relief of congestion and will probably effectually frustrate it. The Board would find in such a limitation a most injurious restriction on their usefulness."

This Report that I have just read was signed by Mr. James Bryce, the then Governor of Ireland, Sir Antony Macdonnell, and by Mr. Arthur James Balfour the present Leader of the Opposition. And the last Report which also called for extra funds was signed by Mr. Augustine Birrell, Sir Antony Macdonnell and Mr. Arthur James Balfour. I ask was there ever such a system of governing a country in the civilised world ? A reponsible governor, year after year, sends a Report saying it is absolutely necessary to have more funds to carry on this work of relieving the congestion, but although the responsible governors of Ireland and a recent Prime Minister sign that Report, somebody at the Treasury says: "No, we know more about the government of Ireland than the Government itself," and the Treasury set aside these repeated recommendations. Not only that, not only do they say: "You shall not have the money," but they say: "You must stop your work on the estates with which you are already dealing." In the whole history of civilised government there is no such farce as that. We have been led to suppose that there is a Government and that it is responsible to this House, but here we have a document saying that these things are vital and then we learn from other sources that the Treasury intervenes and puts a veto on the action of the Government of Ireland itself, and says: "No, the Government will not find the money necessary for carrying on the work which must be done before the estates are sold." There is another feature of this matter, even, if possible, still more aggravating. I have said that the situation in the West of Ireland is very strained. So it is, but I think the good faith and honour of the Government is at stake in this matter, because at present there are seven estates, certainly a number of estates, which the landlords have consented to sell. The tenants are willing to buy, and the Congested Districts Board have agreed to buy, whereupon naturally the payment of rent has stopped, part of the bargain being that the arrears which were very heavy should be written off, and one year's rent added to the purchase money in lieu of them. The estates are here. They are the O'Donnel estate, the Knox estate, the Power (Cloonmore) estate, the Begley estate, the Blosse Lynch estate, the McDermott estate, all in County Mayo, and the Maberley estate in Roscommon. The Blosse Lynch estate is over 18,000 acres in extent, and is, as all these estates are, particularly suitable for the purposes of the Board. On the estates the landlords have agreed to sell, and the tenants to buy, an inspector of the Board has gone down on the demand of the landlords and tenants alike. But after sending down an inspector and agreeing to buy, the transaction is stopped. The sending down of an inspector was taken by the people as a pledge, but the Board sent down a circular saying: "We have no more funds, and we will not buy." The people were proceeded against by the landlords, not only for the rent for the current year, but for all the arrears. Is it any wonder that we hear that cattle-drives are being organised, and the whole place is in trouble? Besides these particular estates there are several others offered to the Board, but they have not agreed to buy, and in these cases if they are not bought there will be a distinct breach of faith on the part of the Government. With what face can the Government send police to carry out collections of rent or evict these people? I say the Government is in honour bound to buy these properties, and as I hold, to buy others. As regards these seven at all events and others in the County of Kerry, of which my hon. friend will speak, they are bound in honour to buy, as they have taken action which is accepted by the people as a pledge that they will buy. It is impossible for the Government to take this attitude in dealing with the people of Ireland, that the Government is not one whole in this matter. The Government cannot go to the people of Ireland and say: "I, the Irish Secretary, would like to buy these estates, but the Treasury will not allow me to buy." The Government is a united whole, and they are responsible, as a Government, for the whole of the government of Ireland, and if they say this, the Irish people may say: "What amount of pressure do you require to be brought upon the Treasury." I take a neighbourhood well known to the right hon. Gentleman—the Maberley estate in the south of Ireland. In that parish there are about 5,000 acres of grazing land untenanted and waste land, and there are several hundreds of small holders on the borders of the lands. On the Maberley estate, one farmer has 830 acres held from year to year on the English system. He is only four years in possession, and has many farms elsewhere. There are 400 families in the parish, 300 of whom have little holdings of under £10 valuation, and there is this ranch of 830 acres at their very door, offered to the Government, covered by the cattle of a grazer, and yet the Government will not buy, and we do not know when the Government will be allowed to buy. Is that a condition for things that can continue? What right have you to turn on these unfortunate people and blame them, after you have treated them in that way? You have allowed the express desires of the Government to be set aside by the Treasury. That is the situation, and I want to know what the Government propose to do. We are promised a Report from the Dudley Commission, and I gratefully acknowledge that the right hon. Gentleman has undertaken in the King's Speech to introduce a Bill granting compulsory purchase to get these grazing lands. Would it not be a good beginning to take those that are offered to you? Might not this argument be used against the Government when they bring in their compulsory Bill—"Why did not you buy the land offered to you." Besides that, it is all very well to say we are going to have compulsory powers; but will the Lords pass it? We have had experience of that. We want to know what is going to be done now by action which is entirely within the competence of this House, and without having recourse to the House of Lords. Why not do it by administration pending legislation? Then you will be able to say that you are doing your best pending legislation. Therefore, what I would propose is that the Government should without delay bring in if necessary a supplementary estimate which would carry us on for three or four months—that is a very modest demand—until we see the Dudley Report and so know what the prospects are. Send over to the Congested Districts Board to buy these estates at once. Give the people an assurance that at least in the near future something will be done to relieve their condition. That would carry us over the present crisis at all events. Set free the hands of the Board and allow them to buy all the estates offered to them at a fair price. Then let the future take care of itself. I am told that the Board estimate that it would cost about £130,000 to buy all the estates now offered them and to do the necessary work. A portion of that £130,000 would be supplied by loan and a portion of it by the rents collected on the estates. But put it down at £100,000 necessary from the public grant. They have only

£11,000 or £12,000 of the permanent revenue available. Unless some additional money is granted within six weeks or two months, the Board will be obliged to dismiss the whole of its labourers, numbering now 3,000 men. That will cause considerable poverty and distress. Let us at least decide to give the Board a free hand to purchase, and avoid a very serious consequence, which I am afraid will otherwise follow. That is my suggestion. One word on the question of parish grants. These are given to encourage people to make improvements in their holdings and especially in their dwellings. The system was started four years ago and is a very creditable one. I think it was started while the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover was in power. It was started in a few districts, and has now spread over the country. These parish grants were given in this way. There are representative committees, including clergymen of all denominations and public men of the parish. They consider applications for works of improvement in the way of building houses, putting down concrete floors in the houses in place of earthern floors, putting in larger windows, and adding rooms. I have never seen so great a transformation in the face of the country as these grants have brought about. I do not know of any system ever introduced into Ireland that produced more self-help than these parish grants. When the system was started most of the houses in the district I am speaking of had cattle and pigs in their houses. They have been cleared out. The houses have been greatly improved, and now one of the things the Irish Government is interesting itself in is a war against tuberculosis and consumption. What could be more beneficent than giving encouragement to these poor people? The earthern floors which were in a continual condition of dampness have, from the example set by the Board, in many districts been replaced by concrete floors and raised three inches above the surface of the earth, which has had the double effect of making the house dry and perfectly easily drained. These might appear to be rather silly points, but they are practical and have a great effect on the health of the people. One of the causes of tuberculosis and its spread in the West of Ireland is the shocking ventilation of the houses, and the insertion of larger windows by these parish committees would have a very substantial effect in lessening the disease. Yet the Board have issued a statement that they are obliged to withdraw their parish committee grants this year in consequence of the action of the Treasury. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman in this matter. I assure him the withdrawal of these grants will create the greatest possible discontent and dissatisfaction in Ireland. I appeal to him in face of the statements made in these Reports signed by the right hon. Gentleman himself, by Mr. Bryce, and by the Leader of the Opposition, that it would be a cruel thing that for the sake of £11,000 the British Treasury should intervene and stop these improvements which have undoubtedly been a most fruitful source of improvement in Ireland. These people have been content to live for a long time under conditions which were simply horrible and their places have been made the show places of misery to every executive Minister who came to Ireland. Every Chief Secretary is taken down round Belmullet to see the miserable conditions of these people. It is, they think, extraordinary for this Government to stop the work of the Board, which is the only body now operating in the West of Ireland on these great questions of making holdings economic and of improving the housing accommodation of the people. I might point out to hon. Members what is the condition of some of those holdings, and how absurd it is to apply relief without some authority which can take the estate as a whole. I have in my hands the particulars of an estate which has been sold to the Congested Districts Board within the last few months. It is in my own constituency. One of the holdings consists of 5 acres, 3 roods and 5 perches, the total valuation of which is £1 12s. 9d.; it is in seventy-three different divisions, a few of which exceed the value of 2d. a year and some are of the value of 1d. a year. That holds good of two other cases, where, in spite of a fair rent fixed, there are seventy-three divisions valued at from 6d. to 1d. There is another case of 8 acres, the total value of which is £1 5s.; there are sixty divisions, of which twenty are valued at 6d. and several more at 1d. How can you deal with estates in that condition without having a board such as the Congested Districts Board? On these grounds I make a most earnest appeal to the right hon. Gentleman. His policy is to apply a radical remedy, applying it, as was understood and promised under the Act of 1903, not merely piecemeal, but on a generous scale in the congested districts of the West of Ireland. That was part of the policy of the Act of 1903. Specific improvements were made in regard to purchase and in the two years which followed the passing of the Act the purchases made by the Board led the people to believe that some attempt was going to be made to carry it out. What are the Irish people to think if on the accession of the Liberal Party to office this work is to be stopped and that they then come down to this House and ask us to pass—as I trust and hope we shall pass—a compulsory Bill, when at this moment they are in a position to provide twenty estates without compulsion, if only the Treasury did not block the way? I beg to move.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.) in seconding the Amendment, said they who lived in the West of Ireland knew that the condition of the people there had not been overdrawn; on the contrary, it was impossible to overstate the condition of misery in which some of the people of the western districts were living. The Congested Districts Board was established in 1891, primarily to deal with these districts and to do something to lessen the misery and to brighten the homes of those who lived in them. For a number of years, it was true, those operations were limited to the fishing industry and other matters, and it was not until 1899 that the Board devoted a considerable share of its attention to the purchase of estates for the relief of the congested districts. He found in the answer to a Question which he had put to the Chief Secretary that day, an account of the work done in the way of purchase and improvement of estates before and after the passage of the Act of 1903. The amount of land purchased before the passage of the Act was extremely small. In the whole of Ireland it was put at over half a million, and the improvements effected on the land thus purchased—improvements effected not from Government sources but with the rents paid by the tenants themselves—amounted to £181,000. This sum must have considerably improved the condition of the holdings comprised in the half million. But since 1903 it was true that some progress had been made. More estates had been purchased. They desired, however, that this question should be dealt with quickly and immediately. They felt that the progress was unhappily too slow, and they were anxious that there should be greater speed on the part of the Government in dealing with the subject. Since the passage of the Act of 1903 land had been purchased to the amount of about a million and a half, and he thought that over a quarter of a million had been expended in improvements. At the present moment there were large tracts of land which could be used for the purpose of relieving congestion. But he wished to deal not so much with congestion in the West as in the South-west of Ireland. The amount of land purchased in County Kerry before the Act of 1903 was only £3,893, and the amount spent on improvements was £161. After the passage of the Act £143,000 had been spent in the purchase of land, and under £20,000 had been spent on improving the land. Taking these figures before and after the passage of the Act, he would suggest to the Chief Secretary, when he explained the condition of things in Kerry, that these figures would be found entirely unsatisfactory, and he could not be surprised if in Kerry they were at present thoroughly dissatisfied with what the Congested Districts Board or the Government or the Treasury had done for them. The congestion in Mayo had been described by the hon. Member for East Mayo, but the House might be satisfied that they could be engaged in no better work than that of doing something to ameliorate the condition of the people who had to live under circumstances such as his hon. friend had described. The conditions in Kerry might not be exactly as bad as in Mayo, but they were very nearly as bad. The estates in that county about which they were most anxious at the present time were the Ventry estates, of which he would take one part, situate near the town in which he lived. There were ninety-five holdings on this particular town land, with a population of 473. The valuation of those ninety-five holdings reached the grand total of £69. Ninety-five families, numbering nearly 500 people, had to live in houses of a total valuation of less than £70; in other words, the valuation per head of the population content to live in these districts was under 3s. One could imagine the condition of the houses in which the people lived; one could imagine the annual budget of these families, and wonder how it was that they were able to keep body and soul together in such poverty. But those he mentioned were a tithe of the class of holdings scattered over the Ventry estates. Practically half County Kerry was congested, and the average valuation in the congested districts must be under 30s. per head. What was the class of house in which these people had to live? The Census of 1901, he was sorry to say, disclosed a condition of things which was not equalled even in Mayo. Despite all they had done in Kerry under the Labourers Acts—and they had done a great deal, in some cases taxing themselves at 1s. in the £, the maximum which the law allowed—the fact remained that his native county was the worst housed part of Ireland. Undoubtedly it was true that one of the great sources of tuberculosis in Ireland was the existence of insanitary, small, and miserable dwellings. Kerry had a population of only 170,000, for in the last fifty years the emigration from that county had been over 250,000, the best brain and muscle of the population going abroad to increase the wealth and produce of other nations. Anything that was done to remedy that condition of things would be a benefit to the country as a whole. Something should be done to stop this national loss caused by the emigration of the young men and women from Ireland. It had been said that in Kerry they had very little untenanted land for the relief of congestion, and that, therefore, the Board had some excuse for not dealing with congestion in that county on the same large scale as in the west of Ireland. Congestion did exist and some effort should be made to relieve it. They could not relieve it as Mayo could, but there were other ways of relieving congestion besides the taking of the people in large batches and planting them on new virgin soil. They might not be so effective, but still they were very useful. In Denmark half the holdings were under 7 acres of land. Seven acres of the best land in Ireland would be considered an uneconomic holding. It would be asked how it was that in Denmark men were able to live, he would not say luxuriously, but still in decent homes, with fairly comfortable surroundings and with enough to live on, and were not able to do it in Ireland. There were many reasons for that. By means of better systems of agriculture which could be imported only by such a board as the Congested Districts Board coming in and taking a deep interest in the people and showing that they were anxious to improve them, land could be drained, fenced and improved, roads could be made, fisheries could be assisted and various other things could be done, which would have the effect of improving the conditions under which these small holders lived; and if they did not make them as well off as the tenant of Mayo, who could get twenty to twenty-five acres of land, they would certainly wonderfully improve their condition. He now came to the estate of which he wished more particularly to speak — the Ventry estate. It was a very large estate with a rental somewhere between £20,000 and £30,000 per annum. It was situated in the district that he had described with very small holdings, bad houses, and everything else of that class. Ever since the passage of the Act of 1903 he had done everything in his power to induce the landlord to sell that estate to the Congested Districts Board, and for years it was absolutely useless. He was refused point blank until finally on some consideration—he did not know what it was—the landlord said he would sell. The tenants were delighted. They thought that at last the way was open for improving their condition and brightening their lot. Satisfactory agreements were entered into between landlord and tenant. The landlord said he was satisfied to leave the price to be fixed by the Board itself, and as to the question of arrears, which were very large, he should say averaging about five years and in many cases going up to fifteen, with the small tenants he actually accepted half a year and with the larger tenants he accepted a year in full discharge. Those were the terms which were sent up last August to the Congested Districts Board. In the following November they received this letter in reply—

> "SIR,—I am directed by the Congested Districts Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 16th inst., and to state that at their last meeting they authorised the opening of negotiations with Lord Ventry for the purchase of his estate, but they are not yet in a position to say whether they will be able to come to terms."

—terms, of course, being the price arranged between landlord and tenant—

> "Some time must necessarily elapse before a decision is arrived at, as the case has only just been taken up."

The tenants on the receipt of that letter came to the conclusion that he thought the House would come to, that there seemed at that time to be no barrier to the completion of the sale except possibly that the Board and the landlord might not agree as to the price. They heard nothing further as to whether the Board would buy until 15th January, six months after the bargain was finally completed between the landlord and the tenants, when they received a letter informing them that, owing to insufficiency of funds, they were unable to proceed with the purchase of the estate. The House could imagine the dismay with which this was received by the tenants! He had some responsibility in the matter and he claimed some credit for having been able to bring about the agreement, but when all that was completed and landlord and tenants were satisfied as to the price to be paid, it looked extremely strange that persons should step in and be the cause, as undoubtedly in this case they would be the cause, of trouble and confusion in the district, and that the sole persons to bring it about were the Government Department in Dublin Castle. This was a position of things to which he would ask the serious attention of the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman had received a series of letters and resolutions on the subject and would admit that there existed in this district a very serious condition of things, and that it would be to his interest, and to the interest of all who were anxious for the peace of the country, to see that something was done to complete the negotiations that had been entered into. The landlord had done his part, and he had no blame whatever for the landlord or for his agent, who had met them satisfactorily. He was only sorry that the landlord would be compelled to adopt a course for the collection of his rents which would be very unsatisfactory to him and to the tenants. What was the position of the tenants? They were poor, wretched, miserable tenants of small holdings. They thought last August they had finally parted with landlordism as such and that a new era was opening for them, that their holdings would be improved, drained and fenced, that work would be given them which would keep some of them at home from the emigrant ship, and that their houses would be improved. Instead of that they got as a New Year's gift from a Liberal Government the statement that it was all up, that they were to go back to the old condition of things and to continue paying the old impossible rent. The tenants had said they would never again pay a penny to the landlord, and the landlord naturally was compelled to resort to extremes in order to collect his rent. What was the condition of things that would be created a fortnight hence, when the decrees were granted? The district was now peaceable and quiet and wanted to be quiet. The right hon. Gentleman could not find money for the purchase of the estate, but he would have to find money to drag in battalions of police in order to execute these decrees, and it would be hopeless and ruinous to both tenants and landlord. That was a condition of things which he certainly did not like to face and which he should like to see remedied. To show how the Board did its work, they got a letter on 15th January returning the maps and papers of the estate. Would it be believed that the agent himself had told him that three days before he had had a letter from the Board asking him to send up the maps and papers of another estate? Lest it might be said that this was the first opportunity the Board had had of purchasing land in Kerry, and that their refusal was solely due to the action of the Treasury, he would read an extract from the Report of the Commission recently held, in which the agent, Mr. McClure, stated that in 1904 he sent up an estate to the Congested Districts Board. He got an engineer to draw maps and everything else and sent them up. He waited for months and months and sent several letters to inquire whether the estate was suitable or not. He got the usual form of acknowledgment, and after about twelve months delay got a simple letter saying: "We cannot purchase this estate," and that was all he got. Mr. McClure appeared before the Commission and stated that owing to the way in which the Congested Districts Board had for years treated him, he would be very slow in future before he offered them an estate again. He was afraid now, after the way in which the Board had treated the Ventry estate, it would be extremely difficult for them in the future to get either landlord or agent to offer any estate to the Board. He would appeal to the Chief Secretary to consider the position in which they and other tenants similarly situated would be placed if the Treasury insisted on withholding the money necessary to carry out the work. Nobody suggested that the House or any party in the House should tie itself down as to what they would do when the Report of the Commission came up for consideration. Until it came before them and until the legislation framed on it was passed, and that might be a very long time, it was the bounden duty of the Chief Secretary, both in the interests of the people for whom the Board was originated and in the interests of the peace of the district concerned, to insist that the Treasury should not block the way, but that money should be granted for the purchase and improvement of estates.

Mr. Thomas O'Donnell.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '£21,805,000,' and insert '£21,804,900'"—(*Mr. Dillon*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed—

"That '£21,805,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I will not trouble the House for more than a very few moments, because I think that the case which has been put by both my hon. friends has made the question sufficiently clear to the minds of hon. Members. There are one or two points I wish to emphasise. Of course, this discussion is limited to one particular point. We do not know what the future of the Congested Districts Board will be, and no one will know until the Report of the Commission is published what their recommendations will be for the future. As far as we are concerned we have an open mind upon the whole question until we see those recommendations, and until we have had an opportunity of fully discussing them. We are not pre-judging any question which may arise as to the continuation of the Congested Districts Board and its powers and resources. We are only now concerned with this narrow point. Until some change is made and fresh legislation proposed we say that it is an absolutely idiotic policy for the Government not to allow the machine to go on working. I am sure that, in this matter, we shall have the sympathy of many hon. Members above the gangway, and I am sorry the late Prime Minister has gone, because he originally instituted the Congested Districts Board, and I am sure his sympathies would be with us. What we ask is that this machine which has been carrying on its beneficent work in Ireland should not be rudely brought to a stop pending any alteration in its constitution or powers. All we ask is that provision should be made to enable this Board and the Government to carry out their solemn engagements in the immediate future. My hon. friend who opened the debate spoke of eight estates, and the hon. Member who followed him spoke of an additional one. I do not think that

that exhausts the list. The Congested Districts Board have entered into engagements with both landlords and tenants on a number of estates for purchase, and now by the action of the Treasury they are prevented from carrying out those engagements, and the immediate result will be disaster to the peace and tranquillity of those parts of the country. I am not one of those who pay much attention at all to the claim put forward by successive Chief Secretaries that the Treasury is entirely to blame. The Treasury has to obey the Cabinet, and, therefore, it is the Government as a whole that is to blame in the matter, and I cannot conceive that if the Chief Secretary went to the Cabinet, explained the circumstances, and insisted upon the Treasury providing the necessary money his demand would be refused. It is only a temporary proposal we are making, and a comparatively small amount of money would be required to tide over the interval between now and the consideration of the larger question in the Report. I would urge upon the Chief Secretary that, after all, it is in his power to have this thing settled. The right hon. Gentleman is in the position of insisting that he shall be given the means of preserving the peace and tranquillity of this district, and if he cares to take that attitude no Cabinet would be able to resist his demand. I have in my hand some correspondence from which I wish to read a few extracts, because it affords an instance of another estate which has not been mentioned at all, and shows the extraordinary injustice and confusion that has arisen in Ireland. This correspondence has been sent to me by the solicitors of the landlord concerned, so that I am giving the case from the landlord's point of view and not from the point of view of the tenant. It relates to the Digby estate in the County of Galway. I will give the name of the solicitors if required, but I may mention that they are an eminent Dublin firm. Here is the letter of theirs, dated 22nd February this year, written to the Secretary of the Congested Districts Board—

"Dear Sir,—On the 6th of January last, we wrote to you informing you that Mr. Digby would have to make arrangements for re-letting of the grazing lands and asking you whether your Board intended to have the estate inspected as promised or not. You acknowledged the receipt of our letter and said it would be considered by the Board. Under these circumstances we advised Mr. Digby to wait until we heard what the Board's decision was. We had a visit from him to-day, and he says that he will either have to let the lands lie derelict or let them for eleven months grazing from the 1st prox, and we told him we would write to you and ask you to let us know by Tuesday morning whether he was to make the letting or not. He has gone down to-day to arrange about the letting and is returning on Wednesday morning. We do not think that your Board have treated Mr. Digby very fairly having regard to the following facts: Mr. Digby offered this estate to the Estates Commissioners, and the papers were before them when he received a letter from you some months ago asking if he was willing to sell the estate to the Congested Districts Board. We brought the matter before the Estates Commissioners, and they stated they thought Mr. Digby had better deal with your Board as there would be less delay. On the 1st October we sent you the maps and papers and a copy of the letter of the Estates Commissioners, and we asked you if your Board were in a position to make an offer for the estate, as our client was naturally anxious not to lose his priority with the Estates Commissioners if your Board were unable to deal with the estate. On the 4th October, we received a letter from you sending us forms to be filled up which you asked us to return as soon as possible, and you added, the Board will then have the whole of the estate inspected. We spent several days in filling up these forms and we sent them to you filled up in every particular except the price asked, and a couple of days afterwards we called on you and filled in the price, and you then informed us that the papers had been sent to the Chief Inspector who would make an appointment at an early date for the inspection of the estate. Since then we have written you several letters which you said you would bring before your Board, but we have received no answer to these letters save formal acknowledgment. Mr. Digby informed his tenants early in October that he had offered the estate to your Board and that they were sending down to inspect it. Now if he proceeds to let the land for grazing his tenants will think that he has not told them the truth as they would naturally think it inconceivable that your Board having undertaken early in October to inspect the estate should have done nothing in reference to the matter up to the end of February. There will, therefore, probably be considerable ill-will in reference to the lettings."

On 24th February the Secretary to the Congested Districts Board wrote—

"With reference to previous correspondence and your letter of 22nd inst., I am directed by the Congested Districts Board to state that pending action of the Government on the Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion, and owing to want of funds for improvement purposes the Board are not at present in a position to proceed with the purchase of above estate."

On 26th February the solicitors wrote—

> "Mr. Digby has called on us and informed us that he read Mr. O'Brien's letter to the tenants and thus satisfied them of his good faith, and that in order to facilitate matters they fixed a price for the purchase of the tenanted land, viz., twenty years of the present rents of the holdings and for the untenanted land such price as your Board or the Estates Commissioners should fix. They also agreed to his letting the untenanted lands for grazing pending completion of the sale."

So far as the landlord and the tenant were concerned they are both willing to carry out the arrangement entered into with the Congested Districts Board, but that Board wrote back to say that it was impossible for them owing to want of money for improvements to go on with the purchase, and they wind up by saying this remarkable thing on 27th February—

> "The Board regret that owing to the want of funds for improvement works they have had to postpone the consideration of about ninety estates offered to them which they were most anxious to proceed with."

My hon. friend the Member for East Mayo used an argument which I fancy will be heard of a good deal in the future. He asks with what face can the Government come here and ask for compulsory powers, on the ground that it is impossible to purchase without compulsory powers, when here you have the Congested Districts Board stating that there are ninety estates offered without compulsion which they are anxious to buy, and which they cannot buy, because the Treasury has stopped the funds. The position is absurd. I am not asking the right hon. Gentleman or the Government to provide money for the purchase of all these ninety estates. We are making a much more limited demand, namely, that at any rate the Congested Districts Board should be immediately put in a position to deal with those estates which have not only been offered to them, but which they have actually agreed to buy, in regard to which the landlord and tenant have agreed as to the price, where the farms have been inspected, and where everything has been arranged. We are only asking that in those cases the Government should see that the undertaking given is carried out. If the Government persist in allowing this breach of faith with the landlords on the one hand, and the tenants on the other, no one can have any wonder if the result is serious trouble upon those estates. These poor tenants have been looking forward so long to the ending of their relations with the landlord, they thought that at last they had almost achieved their object, and in many cases they had actually agreed to very high prices for the purpose of ending the existing relations between landlord and tenant. Those tenants are now to be told that by the action of the Treasury those agreements are to be broken, and they are to go back to the old condition of things. On the Ventry Estate the landlord has behaved very well, and no one can blame him if he tries to recover his rents. It would be hard to blame the landlord in circumstances like that, but will it not be equally difficult to blame the tenants if they resent this breaking up of agreements, enter into combinations, say that they will not tolerate it, and stand out and refuse to pay any rent at all? You will have on these eight or ten estates where agreements have been made and where they are now going to be openly violated, open war before you know where you are. Therefore I ask the Government and every hon. Member in this House, who is anxious to see legislation in the future on the lines of the Report which we hope to receive before Easter, whether it is not certain that if this state of things is precipitated it will render the chance of passing such legislation almost impossible. My hon. friend the Member for East Mayo pointed out that the money which has been stopped is required for the improvement of the estates, and not for their purchase. The Treasury, of course, have no power to forbid the Congested Districts Board from purchasing. All they can do is to refuse to provide them with money for improvements, and certainly, in my opinion, the Congested Districts Board are bound in honour and in duty, whether the Treasury acts in this unwise manner with reference to money for improvements or whether they do not, to go on and fulfil their undertakings and complete the purchase of those estates which they have agreed to purchase. That will not settle the matter, of course, but at any rate, so far as the Congested Districts Board are concerned, they are bound, I think, in honour to take that course. Among his many offices in Ireland the right hon. Gentleman is, I think, President of the Congested Districts Board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover will correct me if I am wrong when I state I that am not technically president. I am an *ex officio* member of the Board and whenever I am present I preside.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I am not surprised that the right hon. Gentleman had some doubt as to his real position, and that he has had to appeal to the experience of his predecessor, because I suppose that even yet the right hon. Gentleman has not quite grasped all the positions which he is supposed to occupy in Ireland. At any rate, he is a member of the Congested Districts Board, and whenever he is present, he presides, and therefore he may be taken as in a large degree responsible for that Board. I say that, first of all, its duty is to put this matter before the Treasury in such a way as will make it impossible for the Treasury to refuse the moderate demand that has been made. Apart from the Treasury altogether I say that the duty and obligation lies upon the Congested Districts Board, whether the Treasury does its duty or not, to go on and complete those purchases. Under these circumstances I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to give us a satisfactory answer. There is the greatest possible anxiety in Ireland and upon these benches, because we are all anxious that we should not be driven into turmoil, disorder, and trouble on those estates, and yet I see no means of avoiding it unless the Board fulfil their obligations and the Treasury give them the means of doing it.

Mr. BIRRELL: I wish the House were better filled in order that the vastness of the task of relieving congestion in Ireland might be fully realised by hon. Members. It is right that the question should be in the most striking manner brought before the notice of the House. I have already expressed my own opinion upon the size of the transaction and its cost. I think we are all agreed upon its importance. At the same time it should, I think, be remembered that the Congested Districts Board no doubt has been entrusted with powers and duties which, if they discharged them to their full extent, would involve enormous income and expenditure. That income they have never had. It was small to start with, and it has been increased from time to time by different statutes, and at last under the Act of 1903, their statutory income reached the sum of £86,250. They have that statutory income, and, as the hon. Member for East Mayo pointed out, they have powers of borrowing from the Board of Works upon the enhanced value of their holdings, which materially increases their income, but these are the only sources from which they have ever been able to derive funds, not sufficient, or anything like sufficient, to deal with the whole problem of congestion or the relief of congestion. But they have dealt with it as well as they could. They have been in existence now for some fourteen or fifteen years and the result of their labours has been that they have purchased holdings or agreed to purchase holdings in those districts to the extent of 14,536 and it is calculated that there are 84,958 holdings within their territories. Consequently they have not been able really to deal with one-sixth of the problem during the years they have been in office. It is only fair to say that of late they have had this extended income of £86,250. That is all they have got. I am told that the Treasury has suddenly come down and stopped the money which the Congested Districts Board were entitled to assume they would get. That is not the case. The Treasury has never put the Congested Districts Board on the Votes. It has been left entirely to deal with this enormous problem—far too vast for any board with such a limited income to deal with—on the £86,250 and the power of borrowing from the Board of Works on the enhanced value of the holdings in consequence of their improvements. Therefore, whatever else may be said against the Treasury, it cannot, at all events, be said that they are stopping the work. This is an absolutely new demand which is made by the Congested Districts Board. I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite that the Board have at different times indicated in their Reports that they have not got a sufficient income to enable them at all satisfactorily to grapple with the vast problem which has been entrusted to them. The hon. Member for West Kerry has referred to the things they must do—the improvement of estates, fencing, draining, making roads and the like, as well as fishing and other duties which they are supposed to do. But even confining themselves to land, which I agree with the hon. Member opposite is the main thing, and the making of these holdings as far as possible economic, they cannot be said to have had any very particular success in that direction, because I am afraid that even on the Dillon estate, which is their great achievement, the holdings are not what are generally considered economic, though no doubt they are a vast improvement on what they were before the estate was purchased and improved by the Board. That is a great achievement, but it cannot be said to have accomplished the great object of making the holdings economic. They are still much too small to deserve that title. I am not underrating the importance and the gravity of the present situation, but it is not fair to create the impression that the Treasury have stopped the source of supply which hitherto has flowed into the coffers of this Congested Districts Board; that is not the case. The fact of the matter is that the Congested Districts Board have lost sight of the fact that every acre of land brought before us at our meetings has to be improved. I do not wonder, speaking as a member of the Board, that we have run short of money. Though my connection with it has been very short, I quite recognise that my own withers in this matter are not entirely unwrung. It might have been better if on one or two occasions when I have been present I had been more ruthless in pointing out how impossible it was for the Congested Districts Board with this income to go on purchasing to the extent they have done in the past, without seeing their way to improving the estates in anything like a reasonable time; but I quite feel that the atmosphere of Rutland Square, Dublin, is a little different from that of the Treasury. It is admitted that every acre of land they buy must some day be improved, and whether it can be improved, and this great work of relieving congestion carried on, really depends on the generosity, or the justice, of this House, whatever is the right name to apply to it, because it involves undoubtedly a very considerable increase unless this sort of thing is to drag on for sixty or seventy years, which is unthinkable. Unless it is to drag on that enormous amount of time, this House, at no very distant date, will have to make up its mind whether it is to continue this work of improving holdings, this work of teaching people how to carry on their holdings, discharging obligations of that kind of a most expensive character, or to leave it off. This is a question which will shortly be raised before this House in the best way that it can be raised, namely, by a demand for a considerable increase—an enormous increase—of the funds to be appropriated either to this Congested Districts Board, or to a renovated Congested Districts Board, or to some other Board altogether. Therefore, I want the House to recognise that this Board has really for some time past come to the end of its resources. The reason why, at the end of last year, it was harder up than usual was that it was disappointed of a sum of £158,000 which it expected to receive from the resale of land. These sales became very difficult owing to the action of the people who had to sign the agreements. They were often away from England or Ireland, and, therefore, delays sometimes occurred. We were very short indeed at the end of the financial year, and we had to go to the Treasury to get a loan of £25,000 to enable us to make both ends meet, and we were rather more subject to their criticisms than usual. The Treasury, after all, has not the power to prevent us buying. We can buy these estates through the machinery of the Land Act, and we can pay the interest in the manner provided for by the Act; but I own that I had always felt that the question which pressed upon us was how far we were justified in going on purchasing estates when we knew perfectly well that we had already more than a million pounds worth of land upon our hands, and we really had not the means of doing the necessary improvements. These necessary improvements are calculated at different amounts, and they will be considerable. Consequently I thought, and still think, that it is undesirable for the Board to be indifferent to the amount of land which it purchases. I thought it would be obliged to limit its purchases, and as the hon. Member for East Mayo pointed out in a passage which he read, that has been the course adopted. In 1904-5 the amount for estates purchased was £649,000, in 1905 6 it dropped to £346,000, and in 1906-7 it dropped to £108,861. I therefore say that the Congested Districts Board have realised for some time past that they should not go on buying estates which have been offered to them. The hon. Gentleman says that ninety estates have been offered them.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: These are the figures given by the Executive of the Board.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct in the figures. Probably ninety estates could be purchased now. The landlords are very anxious to sell, and the tenants are very eager that the Congested Districts Board should come in and purchase, but there is no use in telling us that we are a body that can do this by a stroke of the pen. Everybody besides the right hon. Member for Dover recognises that the quicker the land is sold the better it will be not only for the tenants but for the whole community; but it is no use in setting the Congested Districts Board, with its income of £86,200, and what it can borrow from the Board of Works, to do a gigantic work of this kind. The House of Commons must realise that this great work of relief which is being done by the Congested Districts Board is quite distinct from the ordinary purchase of estates by the Estates Commissioners. It is an excellent work, and difficulties have arisen in connection with the subject, particularly in connection with migration. There are two schools of thought in Ireland about the subject. Some people think that it is best, after all, to leave it to the Estates Commissioners, that the tenants show an anxiety far beyond their resources and beyond the economic value of their land, and that the habit of spoon-feeding should be left off. Well, I do not take that view myself. I think that so far as the West of Ireland is concerned, it is altogether a mistaken view, and, moreover, that it would be a most violent retrogression from the steps already taken. What the House must realise is that operations of this kind besides their great cost are sometimes of a disappointing character. I do not wish to cast any blame on the Congested Districts Board because they do not at once buy these ninety or 100 estates which are now in the market; nor do I even blame the Treasury because it does not come at once to the relief of the Congested Districts Board with a supplementary estimate of £50,000, or £60,000 to enable them to go on until such time as this House makes up its mind what it is going to do in this matter. There are some ninety estates which the Congested Districts Board have contemplated buying. As a lawyer I cannot altogether agree that any contract for purchase has been entered into, or even that the estates have been thoroughly inspected, but I quite agree that when negotiations are opened up everything leads to the conclusion that a price will be fixed, and that the matter will be carried through. There is then great rejoicing, everybody is glad, and the Congested Districts Board is raised to a momentary popularity. But we have not done more than that, though that is quite enough in Ireland to impose an obligation on the Board to do all that it can to proceed with the purchase of these estates. I quite followed what the hon. Member for Kerry said about the Ventry estate in County Kerry. I admit that it was eminently an estate which it was desirable to purchase and proceed with the improvements. The owner has shown the utmost conciliation, and has dealt very generously with the arrears of the tenants. The Congested Districts Board can proceed with the purchase of that estate as speedily as possible, but having purchased it they will not be able, for a considerable time at all events, to proceed very far with its improvement. I quite recognise that there is an obligation in regard to this estate which strikes me rather personally, for I think I was present at one of the meetings of the Congested Districts Board when the matter was discussed, and although I had some misgiving I was unable to resist the claim for the purchase of the estate. I did not then realise, I did not know, that we were going to be disappointed by not receiving anything like the large sum anticipated from the proceeds of the sale of land. I hope that hon. Gentlemen will understand that the Congested Districts Board have not abandoned the hope of being able to proceed with the purchase of those estates, although I am afraid the work of improving them will have to stand over for some considerable time. The Congested Districts Board have this great task before them, and for years past we have pressed upon the Treasury the importance of giving us a larger sum. I do not take the view which some people take, that Ministers occupy water-tight compartments, and I am not going to the Treasury to insist on their giving me the money which I think is absolutely essential for Ireland, and at the same time refuse to listen when the Treasury reminds me of the great obligations that are put upon them, and that they have not the amount of money they would like to have. I cannot resign oftener than once a week, or even threaten it. I have to make up my mind whether in the matter of higher education, of the salaries of teachers, of railway conditions, or of the Congested Districts Board, I am going really to insist manfully. [An Hon. Member on the Irish Benches: I insist upon them all.] If I insisted upon them all, I would be in a position of despair. Quite seriously, upon this matter it is no use telling the Treasury that they must give the money irrespective of the condition of the Treasury. I quite agree that the Congested Districts Board will have to be supplied with a great deal more money than at present, and that the House will very soon have to make up its mind as to how that money is to be obtained. In the meantime we are all looking forward to the Report of Lord Dudley's Commission. I have some rough knowledge as to the lines on which that Report may proceed, but I know enough of it to say that it will raise questions of great gravity and the utmost importance, and I hope the House will make up its mind and resolutely set itself to the task of considering what provision it has to make for the relief of congestion in the West of Ireland. When we get that Report, we shall be in a position to consider the best way of dealing with the interests of the West of Ireland. In the meantime all I can say is that I should be very well pleased if the Treasury were to place a Supplementary Estimate upon the Table in order that we might be supplied with larger funds to enable us to proceed with the purchase of sixty or seventy estates. I cannot altogether wonder, however, that the Treasury have a difficulty in this matter, having regard to the circumstance that never before have they agreed to augment the statutory income of the Board. We must have a Supplementary Estimate, but also, I imagine, a Bill, and I can hold out no hope of any such Supplementary Estimate appearing on the Paper. Therefore, for some time to come the Congested Districts Board will have to economise, and the result of that economy seems to involve the cessation of the grants to the parish committees. I know that these parish committees do a very excellent work in encouraging cleanliness and sanitary arrangements. I do not believe that any of them are on the job, but that all the parish committees are doing a good and useful work in sanitation. Unfortunately, when you have to cut down expenses you must often begin by reducing something to which you are particularly attached. I cannot promise, or hold out any hope, that we shall be in funds which will enable us to continue the grant of £11,000 which these parish committees receive at present. I am very sorry for it, because I think it will be a cessation of undoubtedly good and useful work, but we have not the money. The Board has an income and a large sum which it hopes to recover, and which it certainly will recover, from the re-sale of land. Here we have 1,377,480 acres of land on our hands, which have not yet been re-sold, and we have spent £238,473 on improvements. We are ourselves, therefore, somewhat congested, having regard to the smallness of our means; and though I am as fully alive as anyone to the value of the work which the Congested Districts Board have done, and although we have not the means of carrying on all these works at present, I hope to use all my influence with the Board, and all my energy to see that they do not drop the negotiations for the purchase of these estates where the negotiations have already been opened. That is all I can say, except that I trust the time will very soon come when the Congested Districts Board or some other body will be entrusted with sufficient funds to enable them to carry on this great work quickly and usefully, so as to make some impression within the next ten or fifteen years.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I do not desire to occupy the attention of the House more than a few moments, but I wish to add my testimony to the value of some of the work of the Congested Districts Board. I gather from what the Chief Secretary said, that when we have the Report of the Royal Commission in our hands we shall then have an opportunity, not only of discussing the action of the Congested Districts Board in regard to the development of estates and the improvement they are able to effect in connection with the economic holdings, but we shall also have what is even more important, the opportunity of discussing the whole position of the Board, and whether it may be possible and desirable after the experience of twenty years to make some readjustment of the duties, so as to leave the Board more free to do the work which it was intended to do in the development of these estates. I cannot say that I altogether follow the Chief Secretary when he says it is impossible for any Minister to dissociate himself from his colleagues and the rest of the Government. He says that someone made that statement casually on this side of the House. As a matter of fact, it was a statement made repeatedly by members of the Government who have denied responsibility for the action of their colleagues and indeed taken a line directly opposite to that of their colleagues. I am glad to know they have returned to the older and better ways, and I congratulate the Chief Secretary on his return to virtue. I regret that that return to better ways is accompanied by an amount of depression which I think has rarely been equalled on the Treasury Bench. Really, the right hon. Gentleman's views to-day about himself are so pessimistic that I am bound to offer him some good cheer and say that if this awful fate is to descend upon him of which he told us to-day, although we think he is in error, we cannot allow him to write his own epitaph in the language which he has used to-day, but we shall ask leave to write it ourselves. Subject to the views of party we hope that the right hon. Gentleman will long be spared to adorn the position which he now occupies and that he has no grounds for these melancholy forebodings. With regard to the actual work of the Congested Districts Board, I feel that it is impossible for any Chief Secretary to ignore its importance and value. In the second place, I think it would be a mistaken policy to try and prevent the Board carrying out purchases which are not only absolutely desirable, but are possibly offered on terms which may never occur again. I always found the Treasury most ready to listen to any suggestion put before them. The Treasury did say from time to time that the Congested Districts Board ought to regularise themselves and their procedure more than they had done, in the first place, by anticipating the work they were likely to do in greater completeness, and by taking the Treasury into their confidence rather more in advance than they do now. I had, of course, a very short experience of the Congested Districts Board. I was in office only a year, and present at only about half-a-dozen meetings of the Congested Districts Board, but it was apparent to me that the Board would be wise to enter into some arrangement with the Treasury whereby their commitments might be considered in advance and a more complete programme put before the Treasury. It is not for me to say whether or not the right hon. Gentleman ought to have succeeded in getting more money, but speaking on behalf of those on this side of the House I am free to say I do not believe any money could be better or more usefully spent in the real interests of Ireland than that which is spent by the Congested Districts Board. I have visited many of their estates and I have seen how completely the face of the land has been altered by making roads, draining and dealing with flooding, and a variety of things which have made profitable cultivation of the lands possible, and opened up a new future for the people who live on them. Therefore, I believe that every section of opinion in Ireland would say that, badly as money may be wanted for other industries or for application in other directions, this is the most urgent as well as one of the most beneficial ways in which money can be spent at the present time. Therefore I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that he will have the support and concurrence of those sitting on this side of the House in any efforts he makes for strengthening the hands of the Congested Districts Board. Before I sit down I should like to say that I think it would be most unfair and unjust, however important this work of the Congested Districts Board may be, that anything should be done to put back the transfer of land from owner to occupier in the ordinary course which was the primary object of all the Irish land legislation which has passed through this House. I cannot help thinking there is some overlapping between the Estate Commission and the Congested Districts Board, but I do not think you would be wise to hand over the duties connected with the development, charitable work as it is in its commencement, from the Congested Districts Board to the Estate Commissioners. I think it is necessary to have a body like the Congested Districts Board to do this work which, although it is part of the scheme of land purchase and land development, is in reality a totally different work from that of the Estate Commissioners. I believe if you are really going to make the congested part of Ireland anything approaching prosperous, if you are going to give the people an opportunity of developing themselves, making themselves more prosperous, you must have some body for some years to come which will direct that work and initiate a great deal of it. Of course the work of the Congested Districts Board is open to criticism—what is not open to criticism after twenty years work? But in the face of the extraordinary difficulty, and without any light to guide them, they have made but few mistakes, and in regard to this development of land they have very little to regret and a great deal to be proud of, and if it is possible for the Treasury to find a little more money, I do not think they could find it for a better purpose, or one on which public money could be better spent.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE (Inverness Burghs) trusted that the Secretary to the Treasury and the First Lord of the Treasury would listen to the appeal which had been made to them, because there was no doubt that if an opportunity of doing something for the Congested Districts Board was passed over now a great many evils would show themselves in an aggravated form. The right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had told them that the great danger was that chances might be lost in regard to the purchase of estates in Ireland, and thus a great opportunity of carrying out a comprehensive scheme might be allowed to pass. During the months which must elapse before any legislation could be carried, there would be a great many estates in the market, the purchase of which must ultimately be a matter of extreme importance to any person who had a comprehensive scheme in his mind. Therefore, it would be a great pity if the chance of purchasing these estates was lost by any niggardliness at the present moment. Another point was that the administration of the Board necessarily must be uneconomical when it was hampered for the want of the necessary funds to carry on its work. The administration as a matter of fact must be wasteful, for the Board would have in hand a large amount of land which it was incapable of treating properly by the full employment of its staff. He urged the Chief Secretary to make one more attempt to get from the Treasury a grant on a liberal scale, so that the work of the County District Board might be carried on.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) said the speeches to which they had listened on all sides of the House showed that the question which they had raised evoked no party controversy whatever. He heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin with considerable satisfaction, because he said what his hon. friends had been saying—that of all the questions in Ireland which demanded the attention of the Chief Secretary and the expenditure of public money there was none more pressing, urgent, and important than the settlement of the Western Province. Since his appointment the Chief Secretary had made several speeches of a sympathetic and courageous character in the House. Some of them had helped to make the right hon. Gentleman's way so far as it was possible an easy one, but the speech to which they had just listened was one which, though not lacking in sympathy showed a want of courage in dealing with a matter which had been described by all parties as most urgent and important. The speech would be received in the West of Ireland especially with grave disappointment. A question deeply affecting the lives of all the people in those districts—affecting their several conditions and affecting the preservation of the law and of the peace—had been brought before the House in a convincing manner. The case was admitted by all sides, and yet the Chief Secretary would do nothing more than hold up his hands in despair and say the Treasury could do nothing. It was hard to blame Irish Members of Parliament, and it was hard to blame poor peasants in the West of Ireland, if they lost patience over such a question, the importance and the urgency of which was admitted on all sides, not merely that night but for many years past. During the past winter, and indeed up to the opening of this session of Parliament, there was a considerable amount—though not so much as was made to appear in the British Press—of illegality committed in the western portion of Ireland in connection with the distribution of or the attempt to distribute the grazing land amongst the people. What was it that slackened that disorder, that illegality, or whatever it might be called? It was the promise made by the Chief Secretary in the first speech he made this session that during the present session of Parliament a Bill would be introduced and pressed forward by him for the settlement of the question. What chance had that Bill of passing? After the case made out to-day, there was not the smallest chance that the promise made by the Chief Secretary in the beginning of the session could be fulfilled, or if fulfilled by the passage of the Act, that it would be carried into effect by the Treasury. The effect of the speech they had heard that evening would be to bring despair to the hearts of the people and to make them feel that they must again take the law into their own hands. When that was done then the purse-strings of the Treasury would be opened, because pressure would come from the proper quarter. In the early part of this session they had Supplementary Estimates for thousands of pounds in connection with prosecutions and extra policing in the West of Ireland. The ratepayers in those poor districts, where already the rates had reached an almost impossible point, had been threatened with the cost of extra police, and the taxpayers of the three countries were saddled with extra taxes for policing and the carrying on of prosecutions in various parts of Ireland, all arising out of this subject. When the Chief Secretary and his law officers went to the Treasury and asked them to give thousands of pounds in respect of extra police, and prosecutions for disorder arising out of the failure of the Government to put the law into force in favour of these people, then the Treasury willingly opened their purse-strings and ladled out thousands to punish people for violating the law. They asked the Chief Secretary or the Government as a whole to consider the means of preventing a violation of the law. They asked that a grave problem, the seriousness of which was admitted by Chief Secretary after Chief Secretary, and by all parties in the House, should receive consideration, having regard to the force of argument brought in favour of it and not as a result of illegal pressure, to which the people might be forced to resort. If the Chief Secretary could do nothing better than tell them that seven or eight estates in respect of which the Congested Districts Board had practically entered into a contract would be purchased, and that all other purchases would be suspended until the report of the Commission and the passage of an Act of Parliament following upon it—if that was all the Chief Secretary was able to tell them, he could assure him that the western problem would certainly engage his attention during the next few months in a manner which it had not done since he assumed his present office. That was not meant as a threat. It was a plain statement of fact which he was sure the Chief Secretary did not take as a threat. No one who had been brought into contact with the government of Ireland would take it as anything more than a plain statement of fact. Let Members from Ireland do what they would, trouble would and must arise in connection with this matter. The Chief Secretary had made a very remarkable statement that afternoon, and the same statement was made by the right hon. Member for South Dublin almost in the same words. That statement was that when sitting at a meeting of the Congested Districts Board in Dublin it was almost impossible when the question of purchase came up for consideration to resist the temptation to go on with the purchase. That statement might also explain the position which Nationalist Members occupied, and the words they spoke sometimes which some hon. Gentlemen taunted them with as being threats. They were brought into contact with this question, not by sitting in a Board room in Dublin, but in the bogs and fields and the poor cottages in the West of Ireland, where the people were looking forward with hope to Parliament. They knew that the one thing that kept the people within the law at all was the hope which Nationalist Members from time to time felt justified in holding out to them that Parliament would do something for them. They knew that ninety landlords had offered their estates to the Congested Districts Board, and they had been informed that nothing could be done because there was no money. Money could be found for almost everything except the pacification of the people of Ireland. Any amount could be found to prosecute them, but none could be found to bring peace and contentment to their homes. Millions could be found for wars in various portions of the world, and even for the suppression of the people of Ireland, but the statutory limit could not be exceeded when it was a question of arriving at a final settlement of the most urgent problem that could be faced by the government of Ireland or any other country. The Nationalist Party appealed to the Chief Secretary not finally to close the door with the promise that he would do his best to see that the contracts entered into by the Congested Districts Board with regard to these seven or eight estates should be carried out, but that he would go further. They asked him to go to the Treasury and insist that money should be advanced unstintedly if necessary, for the purpose of settling with as many of these estates as it was possible for the Congested Districts Board to get through. The work of improvement must be slower than the work of purchase, but if the right hon. Gentleman had met the people in the way the Nationalist Members had, he would find that the moment an estate passed from the landlord to the Congested Districts Board, the people were prepared to wait for a considerable time for the work of improvement to be carried out, because they knew that once an estate passed into the hands of the public authority it was dedicated to their use for ever, and that, the landlord having passed away from them, it would only be a few months or a year before they entered into their holding, with a chance of making a good living in the future. In his own county there was a considerable amount of untenanted land which had been purchased by the Congested Districts Board. Some of it had been in the hands of the Board for years. Before that land was purchased there was the gravest discontent and grave danger of disorder in connection with it. The people naturally desired that the moment the land was purchased it should be divided amongst them, but they had not quarrelled with the decision of the Congested Districts Board to keep it in its hands for some time until other land was added to it for the purposes of a scheme of a large character. Wherever land had been purchased by the Board, whether the tenanted land had passed into the ownership of the tenants, or had remained in the hands of the Congested Districts Board, trouble of all sorts had ceased.

They could promise—such remarks were not held out as a threat; they would be absolutely ignorant men if they held any such language—that all danger of disorder would disappear from any district where the Congested Districts Board could buy the land, even if it were not divided and the work of improvement immediately carried out. Reference had been made to the Maberley estate. Part of the parish in which it was situated was scheduled as congested. Though that state of things there had existed ever since the Board came into existence. not one single thing had been done, not one penny had been spent by the Board in that parish, the condition of which urgently called for action. Very large rents had been offered to the Board. The grazier and the landlord were willing to sell, and the tenants were almost clamouring to purchase, yet the land was refused because the money could not be obtained. He scarcely thought it necessary to assure the right hon. Gentleman that in Ireland he could not devote himself to any work which was of such importance, or so urgent and necessary for the peace, prosperity, and settlement of the people, as that now brought under his notice. He would again urge upon him to go to the Treasury, or rather to the Cabinet, and impress upon that body that he could not be responsible for the peace, order, and tranquillity of. the country unless he was able to treat it not merely in accordance with his own wishes but in accordance with what he had come to know were the character and wants of the congested districts. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman would not be content with the promise he had made, but would go very much further, and loosen the purse strings of the Treasury in regard to the ninety other estates which were offered. If he did that, he would make his own task easier as well as that of the Attorney-General for Ireland. At the same time the right hon. Gentleman would further his own work of passing through that House the amending Bill which he had promised later on. All these things together would help to bring peace to the people of the districts, and excite hope for the future. All he asked the right hon. Gentleman to say was that the good work of the parish committees would be carried on, and not stopped, or even suspended During the existence of the Royal Commission for almost two years witnesses were called from all parts of the country, and not one spoke against the work of the parish committees; on the contrary, everyone, landlord and tenant, grazier, Nationalist or Tory, spoke in the highest terms of the beneficial and economical character of the work carried out by those bodies. An awful responsibility would be incurred by whoever stopped the progress of the work. The danger to the health of the people alone should be sufficient warrant for spending far more money than the few thousands of pounds expended in connection with these parish committees. He appealed to the Government to keep this work in progress, so that the people might feel that something was being done, without any undue pressure from themselves, and that they might look with some hope to the future.

*MR. GOOCH (Bath) said he had heard with very great satisfaction the promise of the Chief Secretary that in the Bill he proposed to introduce when the Commission had reported he intended to ask the House to make a substantial addition to the income of the Congested Districts Board. On the other hand, he was very disappointed to hear the Chief Secretary say that he did not think it would be possible for him to obtain an interim contribution for that Board. It seemed to him very improbable that the Bill would be able to get through until nearly Christmas, and it was by no means certain that it would get through at all. In any case any relief which the Board could look forward to under that Bill would probably not be available until a year had elapsed. Therefore, it seemed to him that the Chief Secretary ought if possible to make a renewed effort to get out of the administrative difficulties, and obtain the comparatively small sum of money necessary, not to start new work, but to prevent the lapse of the old. He would have thought from the experience of last year that the Appropriation Act would have given him the instrument by which he could carry out the obvious device of the House. He only intervened in the debate for a moment because he happened to be one of the very few Members on that side of the House who knew the West of Ireland well, who had seen the successful operations of the Board, and who knew its officials—very excellent officials they were. There was no work of any Department in Ireland which was better worth helping than that of the Congested Districts Board, and none which gave a better return for the money invested. If he might be permitted to say so, there was a certain unreality about such a debate unless Members of that House knew the particular part of the country now under discussion. Anyone who had ever been in the West of Ireland, and seen the condition in which the people lived, the degradation and almost starvation, and the tuberculosis which arose in consequence, had with him a vision from which he could not escape. The Congested Districts Board was the only authority in Ireland which had no enemy. It had a certain number of critics, but it was the one Board in the country which obtained the enthusiastic approval and confidence of all parties. They owed a debt of thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for having founded it. They had heard that afternoon that the land operations of the Board were of very great importance. Money put in the land farmed by the Congested Districts Board was much safer than the money put into an estate by the Estate Commissioners, and handed over without any improvement at all to the buyer, in other words, handed to a man who had no capital to improve the land. Money given to the Congested Districts Board to buy land, and the land having been bought and improved until such time as the whole character and atmosphere of that estate had been changed from a condition of despair to a condition of prosperity and hopefulness, was as good an investment of British money as any that could be found. He should especially regret the lapse of the work of the parish committees. It had been his good fortune to see their work not only on the Dillon estate, but in several other parts of the congested districts of the West of Ireland, and he was bound to say that he agreed that the money spent by these committees went further than most money spent by the Government. Instead of paying the whole expenses of necessary repairs, necessary housing reform, and increased accommodation, all they did was to give a comparatively small stimulus to local effort. When he was in those parts of Ireland he was immensely struck with the extraordinary results of a £5 note received from the village committee. First of all, money was given, and then a number of the people around lent their services free of charge to convert an insanitary hovel into a place where a family could live in comfort, with a shed attached where cattle could be turned in. He urged the Chief Secretary either by the Appropriation Act or by some other financial expedient to help the work of these committees, and to see that at any rate part of the expectation which had been raised as to the work of the Congested Districts Boards was not disappointed.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said they were all aware that a Commission had been sitting for almost two years, but they were not likely to have its Report before them in a manner which would allow them to deal effectively with it, at any rate during the current session, and for that reason, if it were possible for Unionists from Ireland still more to support that portion of the claim that had been made from the Nationalist benches they would desire to do so. They rejoiced to recall that this important Board was called into being by a Unionist Government, and while the Unionist Party were in power they did not hesitate to endow it with ample funds to perform the important work it was called upon to do. It was notable that it was only when a Radical Government had come into power that this policy of cheeseparing and whittling down its income had been adopted. It was necessary to recall to the House that this cheeseparing was quite in keeping with the whole manner in which the Government was at present administering the Land Act of 1903. Last year there was something over £13,500,000 worth of land for sale in Ireland. Another year had passed and the Government did not provide more than £5,000,000, with this result, that taking into account estates that had been purchased but not yet settled for by the Congested Districts Board and the Estates Commissioners, there was at present almost £30,000,000 worth of land waiting to be paid for by the Government. He was sorry to have to say that it was becoming increasingly plain that the policy of the present Government was only part of a larger policy to strangle and hang up voluntary land purchase in Ireland. There were 100,000 tenant farmers who had purchased their farms; some of them so far back as four years, and who were waiting very patiently indeed considering the circumstances in the hope that the Government would provide the means of placing them on the land as occupying owners. He was sorry that this state of affairs should exist. He was not going to attempt to emulate the violent language used by the last speaker below the gangway. An hon. Member who informed a Minister that if his demand was not complied with the people would take the law into their own hands used a distinct and unmistakable threat. Then the hon. Member went on to say again that if the problem was not dealt with it would assume an importance it had not assumed before the right hon. Gentleman took office. He hoped the Chief Secretary would not be intimidated by such language. He was happy to acknowledge that it was in startling contrast to the statements made by the three Nationalist Members who had previously addressed the House. He had every desire to associate himself with most of what had fallen from them in approval of the work of the Congested Districts Board, and he regretted that there was so much work for such a Board to do in Ireland. Unionist Members from Ireland did not happen to have included in any of their constituencies any congested districts, but that he hoped did not make them the less sympathetic with the needs of such districts, and they regretted that so much needed to be done for them. He respectfully urged that sufficient funds might be in some way or other found for continuing the necessary allowances to these parish committees. They were doing the most excellent work. He was happy to think that as regarded the great problem of tuberculosis a much healthier and more hopeful spirit prevailed in Ireland, and in so far as sanitary improvements and improving the dwellings of the people was concerned they would be only too pleased to associate themselves with the request that at least in this lesser degree the demand which had been made to the Chief Secretary might be conceded. He had only to add that they were not out of sympathy with the demand that had been made, but they were anxious, in whatever further grants were made in this connection, that the legitimate demands of the tenant purchasers who had made voluntary arrangements with their landlords should not have their claims further delayed, or be unreasonably dealt with as they undoubtedly at present were by the Government.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said it would be evident to everybody who had followed the debate that it formed a most curious and ironical commentary upon the pretensions of that House to deal with Ireland in such a way as to do everything which Ireland could do, if she were free to do it, for herself. In every quarter of the House there had been complete unanimity. It was true that the last speaker had thought it necessary to challenge them about one or two phrases, but they could hardly have expected he would make a speech without doing that. Their demand was put forward in a very moderate fashion. It was supported from the benches opposite, and by the right hon. Member for South Dublin; there had been no note of dissent, and the Chief Secretary had agreed that the work, which they were only asking should not be stopped, was not only useful and desirable, but absolutely necessary—work which must be done sooner or later and which ought to be done sooner rather than later, if the very object itself was not to be entirely defeated. And yet in spite of that they were told nothing could be done. They had made three demands. They had asked, in the first place, that the work of the parish committees should not be suspended; secondly, that negotiations actually set on foot, and almost completed, for the sale of particular estates should not be broken off; and thirdly, that the pledges to which that House stood committed to deal with the Western problem in a large spirit should be carried out. On all these three points all the Chief Secretary was in a position to say apparently was: "We will not stop the work. We will not go back upon what we have actually promised in the case of these six or seven estates." That certainly was a most curious commentary upon the government of Ireland by that House. With regard to the work of the parish committees about which there was absolute unanimity, could anybody suppose that if it were a matter of similar importance to Great Britain, work of that character could be stopped for a matter of some £11,000? Anything more calculated to make the people of Ireland bitter he could not imagine than such a spectacle as they had had that afternoon. The parish committee work had shown promise of being fruitful in a new direction. Quite recently the Gaelic League had made arrangements, he thought with a local doctor in Connemara, to visit the homes of the people to instruct them in the precautions to be taken against the spread of consumption, basing, as he understood, the whole of his treatment upon the system carried out by the parish committees. He did not know what the effect on a scheme of that kind would be of the withdrawal of these grants, but he was afraid it would be disastrous. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be encouraged by this debate to press the demands of Ireland and that he would not take it as hostile to himself. They all believed he was most anxious to do all he possibly could within the very limited powers he had to improve the condition of the country over whose government he presided. He hoped the result of the debate and of the unanimity that had been shown would be to encourage the right hon. Gentleman to bring further pressure to bear upon the Treasury to grant what was after all a very moderate demand, a demand simply for a small temporary grant to enable the good work of the Congested Districts Board to be carried on pending further legislation.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that no one who had visited the West of Ireland would be likely to rise in that debate with other than a truly sympathetic feeling towards the work of the Congested Districts Board. He remembered visiting most of the congested districts in the West of Ireland, and he confessed that he found there a picture which did not agree with that which had been placed before the House by hon. Members below the gangway, who always pitched their descriptions in such a very sorrowful and mournful tone that one would suppose they were in a most distressful condition. That was not the result of his observations in Ireland. Casting back one's mind to 1879 and 1880 and contrasting the condition then and now obtaining, nothing could be more marked than the vast improvement which was largely the result of the excellent work of this Board. In the years 1879 and 1880 in the depth of winter he went from one little holding to another to see for himself what the real condition of the people was, with a view to getting them assistance in this country. That he was pleased to say he was able to obtain to the extent of some hundreds of pounds. Comparing the then condition of things with the present state of affairs the cottages were vastly improved, outbuildings had been added, and altogether there was a condition of things which was extremely satisfactory and most gratifying to the visitors who took the trouble to inspect the district. It was very gratifying to find that in every quarter of the House there was a desire to forward this good work. He regretted that the hon. Member for South Roscommon should have sounded a jarring note. He was the first to do so and it was a great pity, having so good a case which needed no action of that kind, that the hon. Member should have inserted in his speech what they felt on those benches constituted a definite and distinct threat to the Chief Secretary. The hon. Member had stated that whereas at present the people were disposed to be orderly and law abiding the condition of things would be very different if the right hon. Gentleman did not get this money apparently by hook or by crook. That was a deliberate threat which he hoped would be absolutely ignored. The hon. Member had done a serious dis-service to his cause by the language he had used, although he felt sure that the general affect of the debate would be to express united sympathy with this work and a desire that it might go on. Reference had been made to the work of the parish committees. He had had plenty of opportunities of observing their work, and he had no hesitation in saying that that branch had been admirably, economically, and efficiently carried out. It must be satisfactory to hon. Members in every part of the House to know that the condition of things in that part of Ireland was improving. He trusted they would hear nothing about extortionate threats, because the work was too good to be assisted by such methods. They were all agreed that apparently the funds at the disposal of this Board were insufficient. Whatever those funds were more might be used for purposes of that kind. They always noticed that hon. Members below the Gangway came to the House more or less *in forma pauperis* so far as money grants were concerned, and he was afraid they were getting rather hardened to that kind of thing. He hoped the work of the Congested Districts Board might go on with that careful attention to detail in all branches of its work. When the Royal Commission had finished its Report he hoped there might be further steps taken towards relieving what was undoubtedly a considerable amount of congestion and distress.

Mr. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.) said he intervened in the discussion for one moment in order to ask one or two Questions of the Chief Secretary about which he had given him notice. He wished to know if one of the largest properties in the West, the Blosse property, was included in the list of those six or seven estates in connection with which negotiations for their purchase by the Congested Districts Board had to be abandoned. He would like to know when those negotiations were commenced, and if there was any truth in the rumour that terms had been agreed to between the Board and the owner. If so, the right hon. Gentleman might have no objection to state the terms agreed upon.

Mr. BIRRELL said he had telegraphed for the information, but he was not able to answer the Questions fully. The estate referred to by the hon. Member had been offered for sale to the Congested Districts Board, but it had not yet been inspected on behalf of the Board, and no price had been fixed. Whether it was one of those estates which came within what he said amounted to £700 or £800 he did not know. He did not really think the matter had gone quite so far, but it was most eminently desirable that that estate should be purchased, and he would do his best to see that the transaction was carried out.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) said he wished to ask the Chief Secretary, in carrying out some of the suggestions made to-day by his colleagues below the gangway, not to allow them to interfere in any way with a point which he knew was causing a considerable amount of discontent in certain parts of Ireland with regard to the allocation of money collected by the Chief Secretary's Department in order to pay the instalments on the land purchased under the last Act of 1903. A considerable amount of money was lying to the credit of the Chief Secretary's Department, which included the Congested Districts Board, which had been collected from the tenants on the various estates, and the money was not paid over to those to whom it should be paid until a long time afterwards. One of the great troubles existing at present in the way of getting land where it otherwise might be had arose in consequence of the way in which those who had already sold their land were being treated. He was sure it would astonish some hon. Members if they knew the way in which business was being carried out. After a large property was sold, perhaps on terms mutually agreeable to landlord and tenants, there intervened a sort of interregnum before the Government could produce sufficient money to pay, and during which the money was not paid over to the person who sold his land. Any scheme suggested for the alleviation of the congested districts must carry with it the particular question of the interest payable pending the settlement with the landlords. He understood that the interest which they received meanwhile was nothing like the rate they could get if their money was invested in a good security. Not only was this preventing sales under voluntary schemes, but it was also the fact that the money collected by the Government from the tenantry on the various estates was not paid over to the landlord until practically the whole of the estate rents had been collected. There was practically £20,000,000 or £30,000,000 hanging over the heads of the Government, and when they collected the money for the sales which were partially completed they waited until they got the money from the whole of the tenants before they paid it over to the landlord. This was a sort of niggardly dealing with what ought to be done in a fair and generous manner, and it was undoubtedly stopping many sales. It was not only a question of want of funds which the Government was unable to supply, but also a question of the way in which the machinery of the Board was being worked at Dublin Castle. If the machinery was worked in a proper spirit, and if proper treatment was meted out to those who would sell to the tenantry and to the Congested Districts Board, the Chief Secretary would have much less trouble in obtaining land for any scheme he had in view. When there was added to the difficulty of securing sufficient funds—and he did not see any chance of those funds being increased in the immediate future—the fact that the organisation at the present time in the office which dealt with this particular point was not kept up to a high state of efficiency, and that proper treatment had not been meted out to those who had already sold their land, he did not wonder that others were prevented from selling to the Congested Districts Board. He hoped the Chief Secretary would take into consideration the case which he had submitted, so that those who had already sold might not be penalised by having to wait four or five years for their money. If the money was not being illegally withheld, it seemed to business men in Ireland that the treatment given to those who had sold their property was most unjust.

MR. DILLON said he could not state that he was satisfied with the result of the debate. The House was absolutely unanimous, but they were told that nothing could be done. But it would be absurd for him to press his Amendment for a reduction of the Vote to a division, and, therefore, he asked leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said he desired to ask the Postmaster-General for some further information as to the way in which he was carrying out the recommendations of the Select Committee in regard to Post Office servants. When a discussion took place in the House some time ago the right hon. Gentleman went into a number of the points and promised to give further information about them. He himself and a good many others were very much disappointed at the delay in carrying out the recommendations of the Committee. He knew well that the right hon. Gentleman had a very laborious task in dealing with all the intricacies in connection with the various recommendations. Still a good many months had now elapsed since the Report had received the full study not only of the Postmaster-General, but of his advisers at the Post Office, and the delay was, he thought justly, causing a certain amount of irritation among some sections of the staff. He, therefore, hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give the House an assurance that the recommendations would be carried out at a very early date. Having said that, he must refer to his treatment of some of the classes in the Post Office to whom the recommendations applied. He would take the case of the engineers. Recently he addressed a question to the right hon. Gentleman with the view of ascertaining what progress had been made with respect to that body of officers. He regretted very much to find that the right hon. Gentleman had taken the words of the Select Committee as meaning that they did not intend that sub-engineers now serving in the Post Office should receive any benefit from the Committee's recommendations. He was perfectly satisfied in his own mind—and he spoke for all his colleagues on the Committee—that it was the intention that these officers should receive substantial benefit, and that it should not be confined, as he understood the right hon. Gentleman proposed to confine it, to new entrants. He did not propose to trouble the House by reading the paragraph in the Report, but it was perfectly clear in his judgment that it was the intention of the Committee that the sub-engineers should forthwith benefit, and that the benefit should not be reserved for new entrants.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I should like to know exactly from the hon. Member in what respect he thinks I am not carrying out the recommendations of the Committee. I have really not been able quite to seize the point.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said his Question to the right hon. Gentleman was—

> "Whether, in view of the fact that in his recent circular applying the recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee, the present officers of the sub-engineers class are not specifically mentioned, it is his intention that the Committee's recommendation in respect to these officers, namely, that after three years sub-engineers service, provided they are pronounced suitable and capable, they be promoted to second-class engineerships, is to be applied to existing sub-engineers."

Clause 490 of the Committee's Report stated that the sub-engineers should form a probationary class pure and simple, and that the candidates who passed the examination qualifying for second-class engineerships should afterwards follow certain lines of work and pay. From the reply which the Postmaster-General gave to the Question on 3rd March, he understood that the right hon. Gentleman had taken the words of the paragraph to mean that the benefit arrangement proposed in the paragraph should apply only to new entrants. He believed he spoke the view of all his colleagues on the Committee when he said that it was never their intention that it should apply only to new entrants. They certainly never intended that the sub-engineers should be practically the only class who instead of benefiting would be losers. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that representations had been made to him by that class setting forth their case, and even if for the sake of argument he admitted that his contention was not correct, he would suggest that they were a class of men whose case was deserving of special consideration. If, by any unfortunate wording of the Committee's Report, the view taken by the right hon. Gentleman was possible, he trusted that an assurance would be given to the House that their case would not be made any the worse on that account, but that these men would be put on all fours with the rest of the Post Office staff in respect of the recommendations. He would like to say a word also in regard to the position of overseers. This was a complicated question, and he did not intend to go into the details, but he had to express his profound disappointment at the interpretation which the right hon. Gentleman had given to the recommendation of the Committee. That disappointment was very greatly shared by these very efficient and trustworthy officers. On 22nd November last, the London Postal Superintending Officers' Association addressed the Postmaster-General, asking him for an elucidation of the recommendation contained in paragraphs 410 and 414 of the Select Committee's Report. The Secretary's letter contained the following—

> "Paragraph 414 recommends that the supervision of the London Postal Service should be arranged between superintendents, assistant superintendents, second class, and the extracts from the evidence contained in our memorandum were given to show that in our judgment the Select Committee intended this recommendation to carry with it the equalisation of the London and provincial supervising conditions."

The case was clearly put by a departmental officer of high position, namely, Mr. Bruce, the Controller, who when giving evidence for the department put in a return showing that the supervising force at a London office was greatly below that of the Manchester office. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman's application of the Report, so far, had not given satisfaction. He would respectfully suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should sympathetically consider the representations which had been made to him with the view of meeting the desires of the men on the lines recommended by the

Committee. He believed that he was correct in saying that the right hon. Gentleman had not given entire satisfaction, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not meet the views which had been put forward with great care in the various documents submitted to him. He earnestly asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the advisability of granting an interview to the men. So far they had not had any important information from the right hon. Gentleman as to the progress he was making in the treatment of the sub-postmasters, although he could not but think that that matter had engaged his close attention. These thousands of postal servants should be put out of the misery caused by the uncertainty which now attached to their condition. He hoped that the recommendation of the Committee in regard to the sub-postmasters, which did not err on the side of generosity, would be carried out. All the evidence put before the Committee showed that the sub-postmasters and their clerks deserved the fullest consideration and the most generous treatment. In regard to the question of the sanitation and constructional arrangements of the various Post Offices throughout the country, to which he attached the highest possible importance, he asked how much money the right hon. Gentleman proposed to spend from this Vote on the works requisite to carry out the recommendations of the Committee in that regard. Many small works and repairs hitherto executed on these Post Office buildings by His Majesty's Board of Works had been transferred to the Postmaster-General's Department. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give the House some information as to what progress he was making with that part of the Report which laid it down as a matter of the highest importance that the Board of Works should have nothing to do with the Postmaster-General, and that the Postmaster-General should be master in his own house. He was bound to say that on the last occasion when he had raised this question the Postmaster-General had not given him all the encouragement he should have liked. The right hon. Gentleman rather indicated that this was a matter which should be proceeded with cautiously and slowly before he could get rid of the delays caused by the Office of Works. The right hon. Gentleman did not answer the question put to him in regard to the chief medical officer of the Post Office. Was there in this Vote any amount taken for the increase of that officer's salary which they knew had been given to him? He was also anxious to ascertain whether that officer still held the appointment of medical officer to the Civil Service Stores and the Army and Navy Stores, or whether the right hon. Gentleman had acted on the view of the Committee that in their judgment it was highly improper that a chief officer of the Post Office should hold outside appointments which might make some inroad on his time. The evidence of the chief medical officer, on which the Committee made strong comments, showed that many of the evils in connection with the insanitation of Post Office buildings was due to the fact that the medical staff was insufficient for the work, and that Dr. Wilson had not time to make the necessary inspection. Lastly came the question as to the Treasury control of the Post Office Department. He thought that not only the Committee, but a great number of Members on both sides of the House were convinced that unless the Postmaster-General was master of his own accounts, unless he was able to run his own business, he would really never be able to serve the public efficiently. And what was more, he would never be able to handle the staff in a satisfactory manner. He was sure that the delays and expense caused by the meddlesomeness of the Treasury must make the life of the Postmaster-General and his officials almost unbearable. The Postmaster-General had to bargain and negotiate with and be more or less a serf of the Treasury. He remembered the last time the subject was discussed the occupants of the benches opposite were very sympathetic in their observations as to the relations which existed between the Treasury and the Post Office authorities and that they thought they should be reconsidered. From what the Committee had said in their Report and from what had fallen in debate from hon. Members in the House it had been shown that this was a matter not only within the range of practical politics but within the immediate vision of the right hon. Gentleman; and he hoped that this year they would see much greater freedom given by the Treasury to the Postmaster-General. If that were so, he was convinced that not only would the right hon. Gentleman find his labours less arduous, but there would be greater content amongst the staff, and he would be able to make further arrangements for the convenience of the public.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will, in reply, take the matters referred to by the hon. Gentleman in the reverse order to that in which he stated them. As to the relations between the Treasury and the Post Office, that, of course, is a very delicate question, and I do not think it is one he will expect me to discuss on the present occasion. Everyone feels the grip of the fetters of the Treasury, and naturally the Postmaster-General would like to have greater freedom in dealing with various matters that arise. But, after all, the Treasury is the guardian of the public purse.

MR. GEORGE FABER (York) drew attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted; and forty Members being found present—

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: So far as I recollect, when this question was discussed, when sitring on that side of the House I have never spoken or voted upon it. The next point referred to by the hon. Gentleman was as to the relations between the Board of Works and the Post Office. It is desirable, no doubt, that the Post Office should be practically placed in possession of a sum for repairs, but that is still a matter of consideration by the Treasury, the Board of Works, and the Post Office, and nothing has been definitely settled. As to the sanitation part of the hon. Gentleman's question, we have given the matter the greatest possible attention, and have received every assistance from the Board of Works. We have also had periodical meetings between our officers and the officers of the Board of Works.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: That Committee was appointed when this Select Committee was sitting.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The fact that the Committee's attention was drawn to the matter was very effective in having all the points considered. I do not think there is now any cause of complaint to be made in regard to sanitation. We are doing the best we can to improve the sanitation of all the Post Office buildings where improvement is required. With reference to the chief medical officer, his salary is on the Estimates. That gentleman wrote to me after the recommendation of the Committee was published, saying that he was about to cease to be the paid officer of the two associations referred to by the hon. Member, and that he would then remain only the paid officer of the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Do I understand that the £20,000 recommended in the Report has not been taken on these Estimates?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No, Sir; this matter is still under the consideration of the three Departments concerned. Then my hon. friend asks me with regard to another matter, the delay there has been in carrying out some of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee. I think he will recognise that it has been really a gigantic task of reorganisation which has been carried out by the Department and myself, and I can assure him that no delay has been incurred which could be avoided. Delay will not affect any existing officer, because he knows that if he has not yet been dealt with, any increase of salary or improvement of *status* will date back to 1st January, and that no advantage will be lost to him by the delay. With the exception of a certain amount of classification I do not think, except in regard to the smaller classes, and in regard to sub-postmasters, that any questions are outstanding. Then there are two other points. One was as to the sub-engineers; but I confess that, even after listening to what the hon. Member said, I still think the recommendations of the Committee applied to future entrants only. But I will look into the matter again. My desire has been to carry out to the full the recommendations of the Committee. As regards the London postal overseers, I do not quite grasp his point, as they get a considerable increase. They get an important minimum increase of £10, and their promotion is also improved in addition to their pay, and I do not think they come out badly under the recommendations of the Committee. As to the deputation, I was quite willing to see them if there were any points to be discussed, but the points appeared from the correspondence to dwindle down to those in regard to which they wanted no further information. As to the actual scale, I took the recommendations of the Committee to the fullest possible extent. As to the sub-postmasters, the hon. Member will recollect that the Committee gave additional time for the consideration of their case; the matter is extremely complicated and will take time. But as a matter of fact, it does not much matter, because the new scale dates from the new revision, so they are not prejudiced by the delay. A short time ago I had the honour of meeting a deputation of the sub-postmasters; I had a very long and satisfactory interview with them, and I hope before very long to be able to settle the questions which affect them on satisfactory terms. I think at the interview we were able to thresh the matter out and arrive, on the whole, at a satisfactory conclusion to both sides. These are the points which the hon. Gentleman has raised; I have not the least objection to his having done so, and I promise him I will look into the subject of the sub-engineers and if he can throw any further light upon it I shall be glad. As to the porters, there are about 10,000 still in suspense, and the matter of classification is being proceeded with. As soon as possible, I shall issue another classification, but that depends upon the results of the Board of Trade examinations and it must take some time. I do not desire to delay in any way, but again I say no one is prejudiced, because any advantages will date back to 1st January and they will receive all the advantages due to their position.

*MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) said that before the House left the Post Office Estimates he wished again to call the attention of the Postmaster-General to the matter of political organisations in the Post Office which was debated on last Monday evening. After that debate even that section of the Press which supported the right hon. Gentleman was in favour of having some further light thrown upon the matter. The *Daily News* of Tuesday said that the matter could not be left in the present position and it ought to be referred to again and satisfactorily cleared up. The drift of the right hon. Gentleman's argument had been that the rules of the Post Office forbade the formation of any association of Post Office servants which was part of a larger organisation, and he vetoed the proposed Post Office Habitation of the Primrose League, because they shared officers and shared an organisation which extended to the whole country. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman thought at the time of this decision that he was adopting a logical attitude, but he was probably not then aware of the peculiar case of the Fawcett Association, which was brought up in the House after he had made his statement. The Postmaster-General had not dealt with the fact that the Fawcett Association had sent representatives to the Labour Conference, which surely proved that they were not an independent body existing only within the Post Office, but were part of a larger and comprehensive labour organisation which embraced the whole country. The right hon. Gentleman defended himself from any charge of partiality, and he was sure they on that side of the House did not think he had taken the course of which they complained, with the idea of favouring any particular political organisation. There were so many organisations within the Post Office, and it was apparently so impossible for the Postmaster-General to be informed of the details of all their constitutions, that he urged that a change in the system was necessary. He thought that if the right hon. Gentleman adopted the course of putting an end to all existing organisations in the Post Office he would have the support of the House, because it would not fetter the individual liberty of Post Office servants to join any political organisation, existing independently of the Post Office. The other alternative was to allow equal rights to all organisations whatever they were, and to allow them all to form Post Office branches. He did not think anybody could possibly support the attitude of the Government in this matter, and he hoped that now the right hon. Gentleman had had time to think it over he would see that the present position was impossible, that the rules had not been carried out as he laid them down the other night, and that the position called for a change in one of the two directions he had mentioned.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he was sorry the Chief Secretary for Ireland had gone out of the House, because he would have liked to put one or two points to him in regard to a speech which was made from below the gangway, but he saw the Patronage Secretary there and no doubt he would be able to convey to the right hon. Gentleman the few remarks he wished to make upon those points. An hon. Member below the gangway had said that unless more money was given to the Congested Districts Board the people would know the reason why. There was some discussion as to whether that was a threat or not, but in view of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman was rather given—he would not say to use threats, but to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas—he believed that was the correct phraseology—he must say that the speech of the hon. Gentleman filled him with alarm because he, as a British taxpayer, feared that further inroads would have to be made into his pockets, and he was one of the numerous band of poor people who were pledged to find £150,000,000 for Ireland, and he did not, however excellent the Congested Districts Board was, find himself very anxious to put his hand in his pocket to find more money for that country. An hon. Member had observed that it was like Oliver Twist, always in a state of asking for more, but, unlike Oliver Twist, it got what it asked for. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would convey to the Treasury a request from some Members of this House that they did not want to increase the grants to Ireland. They were voting £21,000,000, and there were present only two Members of the Government and one hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House, who was their supporter, and others who might be, but it was difficult to tell in these days. Either by the Rules of the House, or by tacit consent, at a quarter-past eight they were going to Vote this money in that condition of the House. With regard to the prevalence of glanders, the Board of Agriculture should take steps to stop the further spread of the disease. He complained of the discourtesy of the Government in having no one present to answer questions on the subject.

Resolution agreed to.

EIGHT HOURS WORKING DAY.

Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.) in moving—"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when, in the interests of the workers generally, and in view of the present large number of unemployed, the working day in all trades and industries should be limited by law to a maximum of eight hours," said the proposal embodied in the Resolution had the merit of being an old one. It had for many years received the almost unanimous support of the organised workers of the country. It had been discussed at scores of conferences and congresses, and was not a proposal which was kept before the public mind by the energy or activity of labour advocates. The Labour Party submitted it to the House as a serious and reasonable proposal connected with existing industrial and social conditions. He was not going to consider the extravagant fancies and stupid arguments against it, such as the arguments that at the stroke of the eighth hour the fireman would stop attending to a fire, or the lifeboat man would stop going to sea. Such arguments were too ridiculous to waste the time of the House upon or to ask them to consider. The Labour Party would not oppose proper and reasonable regulations to make due provision for seasonal trades which would safeguard any loss either of property or labour. In the course of the discussion no doubt arguments would be adduced as to the folly of interfering by legislation with adult labour. But the House for years had interfered with adult labour by legislation, and no such argument should be offered there. The House was the great repository of regulations for labour, and dealt daily with all manner of proposals to restrict, limit, and regulate various social and trading concerns of the nation. He was not sure that a shortening of the hours of that House itself would not be a good thing for the country. His experience of it led him to believe that the output would thereby improve both in quality and quantity. The President of the Board of Trade had recently said he would be glad to have the proposal applied to Cabinet Ministers. Bearing in mind the mischief some of them had done, there would be no objection on the part of the Labour Party to a considerable limitation of their hours of labour. The right hon. Gentleman some months previously had drawn a picture of the distressed condition of the workers in the slate quarries district in this country. He described the distress which prevailed, and told his audience that on account of their unemployment and low wages great suffering was entailed upon these men. He finished his picture by stating that two men who were employers of labour in the slate-quarry districts of Wales, received in profits from the labour of their men more than the men received altogether in the course of a year's work. These conditions had a very close relation to the question of the hours of labour, and he would later submit a few facts to show how the results of the efforts of labour found their way too largely into the pockets of those who took no part in the industries and trades of the country. Between the work of the statesman and public servants and the work of the manual labourer there was a good deal of difference. Cabinet Ministers, for instance, would not like to have their services interrupted by any time limit, because there was a sense of joy in their work, a sense of being of service to their country, which was a greater reward than any emolument attaching to their office. Their activity did not arise from any sordid motive. So that great personal pleasure and comfort formed not a small part in the lives of men engaged in those higher branches of service, generally termed mental labour. They were the men who had holidays and variety in their work, but these conditions were entirely absent from the life of the ordinary industrial drudge who, however, was a necessity in the nation. For the greatest of men, the finest of orators, the best of public servants, no matter how full of ability that man might be, must come down for his comfort, and for his daily maintenance to the work of the manual labourer of the country. He put it to the House that the industrial workers ought not to be worked so long, paid such meagre wages, or treated so badly as they were to-day. The work of the manual labourer was an essential element of civilised society. When any proposal was made to alter the hours of labour they were usually met by the statement that such changes would be followed by the ruin of the concerns in which such alterations were made, and dejected widows and persons of that class were held up as being dependent on the maintenance of the present state of things for their existence. The whole of the prophecies made as regarded the ruin that would follow from the adoption of the proposal had been falsified by events. Many firms in the face of keen competition had adopted the eight-hours system with success. There were great trades and industries in this country worked on that principle. The principals of those trades had not waited for State regulations, but prompted either by public duty or the fact that they saw some advantage to be derived from their action they had established the eight-hour day without any of the evil consequences which it was said would follow it. The Government he was assured had something over forty thousand workers at present on the eight-hours system. That arrangement was more largely the result of administrative action than the outcome of legislation in that House. Some years ago when this change was contemplated it was considered that it would produce greater regularity of attendance, an improvement in the physical condition of the workers, with a consequent increase in their powers of production. As the cost of production had not been increased in other cases, it was calculated it would not be increased in Government workshops. It had been stated by the War Office that these anticipations had been justified, that no extra cost had been incurred by the public, and that the output of work had not been diminished. He submitted that in view of this experience in the case of both Government servants and employees of private firms, they had successes which offered very substantial arguments in favour of a legislative eight-hours day for the country. The House was, he thought, prepared to approve of an eight-hours day by law for, at least, the miners. They were a class of workers for whom he claimed no special right to speak; still he thought it might be said that they had hitherto failed in their agitation and in their efforts to effect an arrangement between themselves and their employers. They had come to the conclusion that before their hours could be properly regulated and safely fixed, legislation would have to be the force to decide those conditions. As soon as the Bill promoted by the miners had reached a point when its passage appeared to be a certainty, a great agitation had been raised, and efforts were now being made to show that the passing of the Bill would be bad for the workers themselves. In short it was being said that if they lessened the hours of labour they would increase the price of the product, because the output would be diminished. But in the last three or four years there had been an annual increase in the output of coal to the amount of about 15,000,000 tons, yet the price had gone up. Now if they were told that a diminution of output due to the reduced hours of labour would bring about a consequent rise of price, how was it that there was an increase of price with an increase of output? He did not think that the House would be deterred, or that the country would be scared, by the alarmists who were now declaring that the regulation of the hours would mean an increase in the price of coal to the country. He was well aware that other reasons were given. It was pointed out that the great demand on our coal by foreign countries had tended to run up the prices. It was rather remarkable in these days of inflated patriotism that the English householder and manufacturer should be made to pay more for his coal by the coalowner because foreigners wanted our coal. He must ask the House to remember the dangers and fears that were always pursuing the colliers in the course of their work. They had seen at Hamstead an awful lesson of how the collier's life was being ever carried in his hands. At such a time they were all full of pity and sympathy for the miner. He asked the House, not only in behalf of the miners, but in behalf of other workers whose occupations were very dangerous, to put some substance into their sorrow by giving relief and lightening the burden which the working classes had to bear. He wanted to say one or two words in connection with the cotton trade. The cotton operatives of Lancashire and the adjacent counties some years ago decided by ballot in favour of an eight-hours day for their trade as well as others. Some years ago, when a ballot vote was taken, a majority of the Members declared in favour of an eight-hours working day. They said now—

> "The matter is now coming to the front again. At the last International Congress of Textile Workers the Lancashire delegates voted in favour of the proposal. The great extension of the trade by the erection of new mills will surely bring the question more within the range of practical politics, as there is certain to be much short time working whenever a depression comes. By a unanimous vote, the Weavers' Amalgamation on Saturday passed a resolution expressing an opinion that the time was opportune for a reduction in the working hours in textile cotton factories, and requesting their central Committee to bring before the United Textile Factory Workers' Association a resolution in favour of a reduction of five hours each week. The question will again receive ample discussion when it comes before the members of the United Textile Factory Workers' Association, and if it receives the assent of the representative body, a determined effort may be made to bring the subject within the range of Parliamentary action."

It was presumed by those who had perhaps no experience of factory life that the Lancashire cotton operatives were generally speaking, very well off, both in point of money and labour. To those who had that view he would suggest that they should read the manifesto drawn up and signed by the accredited representatives of the various branches of the textile dustry, and published by the officials of the textile trade during last year. By that manifesto they emphasised the increasing strenuousness and difficulty of the textile operatives' work—its growing dangers and the sweated conditions in which many of the textile workers found themselves. A classic instance of excessive hours and bad treatment was afforded to that House by the conditions and pay of the railway workers of the country. The House might remember that about this time last year they were asked to consider a Motion with regard to the long hours of railway servants. Many figures were given during that debate, and it was shown that 58,000 railway servants worked not eight, or ten, or twelve hours a day, but thirteen hours a day; 21,000 worked fourteen hours per day; 8,000 worked fifteen hours a day, and thousands worked up to even eighteen hours a day. It was sometimes said by way of explanation or excuse that there were exceptional causes for these hours—the season, the weather, or some unforeseen contingencies. But the Return which gave these figures related to the middle of the year, to the month of June, and it was shown during the debate that if the railway servants were called upon, through some sudden emergency, some special reason, to work for exceptionally long hours, they would not be opposed to it. It had been said sometimes that the long hours were worked because the directors of the railway companies were not able to find men to fill the positions. That argument contrasted strangely with the common boast of railway directors that so popular was the railway service that it was always attracting thousands of men in excess of the number required, and that they had always at hand practically as many men as they wanted if all their employees were to cease work in the event of any serious trouble arising between them and the companies. In regard to the work of railway servants, he might mention that dangerous as was the work of miners it was shown by the figures based on accidents and deaths in connection with the work of railways that the employees in some grades of railway work were engaged in a service which was really more dangerous than that of mining. There was another trade, a big trade, which he thought entirely escaped notice in connection with this question. It was a trade which was commanding a great deal of attention in the way of public discussion at the present moment. There were thousands of men and women employed in breweries and distilleries, hotels, public-houses, restaurants and so on, who were worked scandalously long hours; and he thought he could, with the approval of that House, say that if those who had control over that trade and its various branches were genuine in what they said in respect to the freedom and rights and interests of the working classes, they should set some better example than they were now doing in regard to the hours of labour of their servants, and their general treatment of them in point of pay and conditions. Then they had the building trade, to which the President of the Local Government Board had made special reference. In his speech at the gathering of the Associated Chambers of Commerce the other evening, the right hon. Gentleman enjoined upon the municipal authorities the desirability of better regulating the work which had to be done in painting, decoration and so on, of public offices and buildings. He submitted to the House that the only way in which such regulations could be imposed was by some statutory limitation that would prevent the workers in the building trade from being overworked in the summer-time, from being rushed in so many months of the year, and from being starved and robbed as they were now during the winter months. He had conversed with both employers and workmen in the building trades upon the argument so often brought forward that the work itself must necessarily be done and could only be done during the summer months. Their experience was that much of the work now done in the summer could be as well done in the winter, and only by legislative action could this regulation be imposed so as to give evenness and balance to that class of labour. Other trades and industries could be used for the purpose of argument, but it might be said that there was still the difficulty of competition. It would be asked, whatever would they do if the foreigners overcame them because they imposed an eight-hours day or further limited the hours of labour. They would probably be asked how would they be able to face foreign competition under those circumstances. Leaving aside the whole of the trades he had mentioned, and any of the trades which might be affected by foreign competition, they had any number of home industries and trade occupations in no way touched by even home competition. There were all the trades and occupations in connection with the railway service, tramroads, canals, public buildings, building trades generally, various forms of vehicular traffic work and other trades in which there were hundreds of thousands employed, the regulation of whose hours of labour would provide openings for the class of men who were now shut out from an opportunity of work altogether. Many workmen were compelled now to work a week and a half almost for one week's wages. So much was this the case that the overtime system had grown so great that it was now known in many trades and industries as systematic overtime. This was the condition of things which could only be removed by statutory enactment. Then there was the shareholder. It would be asked what were they going to do with that class of the community who were dependent for their living on their shares and dividends, if there were further burdens imposed upon them. The shareholder had his first concern, and all the time was the man who held himself ready to do his share of work for whatever he was able to get in the course of his life, and he declined to give undue consideration to that class who expected that another class should labour long and unduly, and altogether out of all reasonable expectation in order that they themselves should have their shares and returns maintained at their present level. The present profit from trade and business afforded ample proof of the way in which trades could stand a diminution in the hours of labour. The great gains from businesses, the ever-growing profit of the men at the head of vast business concerns showed that still our trades could stand any such proposal as they were making in this Motion. He would refer for a moment to the conditions which existed in the case of that great new vessel of which they were all so proud, the "Lusitania." It had been shown in connection with that vessel that the coal consumed on a return journey amounted to 16,800 tons. They had royalties in this country, and the royalties alone paid upon that tonnage at the rate of 9d. per ton in the course of a return journey was £630. The same vessel employed 333 men as trimmers, firemen, greasers, labourers and men doing the hard task down in the hold of the boat. The total wages of the whole of those men for a return trip for a fortnight's labour amounted to only £538 10s., or less than the royalty received on the amount of coal consumed for a return journey of that vessel. In view of those facts he thought the House would be willing to accept any proposal which would tend to equalise the burden and give fair play to the industrial workers of this country. The Leader of the Opposition had recently addressed himself to this subject, and said that production and not distribution was the fundamental fact. The sentence was a long one, but that was the kernel of it. In his view the great fundamental fact should not be merely to produce wealth but equitably and reasonably to distribute the wealth so produced. They wanted to give the working classes greater facilities for rest and recreation and of being better men and women, and the Motion would tend towards securing the more equitable distribution which they desired. The hon. Member for North Paddington had presented to the country facts and figures which he had not seen disputed, going to show that one-third of the entire income of the United Kingdom was enjoyed by one-thirtieth of its people. It might be said in the course of the debate that what they wanted to remedy this evil was protection and tariff reform. They had not only had an opportunity of visiting other lands, but they had also excellent newspaper communications to provide facts to shape their judgment upon this question. Last night one of the newspapers which every evening informed them that tariff reform meant work for all contained half a column of the most distressing news which any person could read. In that paper the reader was informed of how in

Paris men and women were living under conditions of drudgery, the lives of slaves paid at the lowest possible rates, even when compared with the workers in this country. It also stated that the hours of labour in Paris were more irksome than in this country. In his opinion, the best way in which to deal with foreign competition was to improve the condition of English workers so as to make them more efficient not by overworking them, but by increasing their capacity for productiveness and improving their general character and power to make wealth. In asking the House to approve of this Resolution he contended that the claim of humanity should be above that of trade or commerce, because in considering the hours of labour they were considering the life of human beings. When they were considering what ought to be done with this class of people, they ought not to consider them as profit making material on which the commercial stability of the nation depended, but as human beings representing the life of the country. In conclusion he asked the House to agree with the proposition that the establishment of an eight-hours day would tend to equalise the burden which now so heavily pressed upon the shoulders of the industrial classes, tend to diminish unemployment, lessen accidents, and improve the character and the outlook for our industrial population.

*Mr. KELLEY (Manchester, S.W.), in seconding the Resolution, said that the question did not come before the House in exactly the same position as it had come before trade union congresses, where for many years it had been looked upon as a hardy annual. He thought it was fast becoming a hardy annual as far as the House was concerned, the Resolution having been moved over and over again by Members representing various trades and industries. The principle had been demanded by miners and bakers and it had actually been asked for by the attendants in lunatic asylums, and when a principle had got that far he thought it was time that the question should be dealt with in the House of Commons. The reason they were asking for an eight-hours day or a forty-eight hours week by legal enactment was that those who had had experience in the labour world knew the difficulties, trouble, and expense of obtaining a reduction of hours in any particular trade. Some years ago he was engaged in a movement which asked not for a forty-eight but a fifty-hours week, and after fighting for sixteen weeks, losing every penny they had got, mortgaging the future and putting the General Secretary in pawn at the bank, they had to give up the struggle as useless because they were not strong enough to carry it through. That was his experience in regard to demanding a fifty-hours week, and a similar experience had been gone through in other industries. Therefore, they had concluded that it was a waste of energy and money that a process of that kind should be gone through when common sense pointed to this House having the power to grant a concession of the kind asked for as an act of justice to be meted out without undergoing the painful process he had described. The conditions of labour had in recent years been very much altered. When he worked at his own particular trade the conditions were altogether different: new machines had been introduced, the speed of old machines had been very much increased, and as a result the output had also very much increased. He ventured to say that under all these circumstances an eight-hours day would take more of the life out of a man than a ten or twelve - hours day would do twelve or fifteen years ago. That was the case in his own trade union and in a large number of others, and that was another reason why they sought an eight-hours day. Then, as had been stated by the mover of the Resolution, it would tend very largely to decrease the number of men who were out of employment. That was a growing difficulty from year to year, and he was quite sure that the whole country ought to be particularly grateful to the trade unions for what they did in spending such a large amount of money in keeping from the rates men who without those payments would have to go upon them. The immense sums of money spent year by year by the trade unions should commend them and the requests made by them to the consideration of the House. The returns showed that one large society of which he had personal knowledge, out of something like 35,000 members had about 14,000 members unemployed, whilst another large society with close upon 70,000 Members had nearly 10,000 members unemployed. Let the House imagine for a moment the number of unemployed in those two particular skilled trades which were in every day request, while those employed worked nine, ten and eleven hours a day! Did it not stand to reason that some effort should be made to equalise employment by which these men should be prevented from working such a large number of hours? Then a great deal had been made at different times in argument and debate as to the impracticability of carrying out the eight-hours day. They heard many Members say the thing could not pay and that it meant ruin. Evidences and experiences they had went to prove that that was not altogether the the thing could not pay and that case. He remembered something like twenty years ago the head of a large engineering house in the North of England doing him and two or three of his colleagues the honour of discussing the practicability of introducing an eight-hours day into his establishment, no doubt in doing so giving them the credit of having some practical experience. They pointed out how it could be done and he fell in with their views, with the result that the system was introduced. The employer afterwards informed him it had exceeded his expectations, and that under no condition would he go back to the old state of things. There was another firm he could refer to further north still which had introduced a forty-eight hour week, where previously they had worked fifty-three hours. Being desirous of knowing how it was working inquiries were made and the reply was that the alteration was beneficial to both employers and employees. From 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. of the workmen had previously lost quarters in the morning and if the men were losing two quarters during the week, and those quarters were the shortest part of the working day, it must be apparent that the conditions they were imposing on the workmen were such as they were physically incapable of fulfilling. After the change in the working hours that was not the case. As regarded workmen on piece-work, they invariably worked in squads, and where one or two men had been unfortunate enough to lose the first quarter in the day it had upset the whole of the arrangements. They found it now decidedly to their advantage and decidedly to the advantage of the men to start work at an early hour, let them have their breakfast before they went to work, and work the whole day with simply one break for meals. The fifty-three hours system occasioned two breaks for meals, which entailed a certain amount of loss to the employer, and the one break was a decided advantage. Then again to go a little further afield, they in the trade union and industrial world were apt to look upon Russia and everything connected with Russia with a feeling of horror and dread, and a thankful feeling that they were not in Russia. Nevertheless he found that in Russia there was a large firm engaged in paper-making. He noticed that the paper-makers in this country were trying to bring about a change in the direction of reducing hours to forty-eight per week. This Russian firm some time ago tried the experiment. He had obtained a pamphlet from the Consul at St. Petersburg which stated that the mill manager expressed the greatest satisfaction with the change and concluded with these words—

> "The operatives have conscientiously fulfilled the obligations they undertook in return for the more favourable conditions of work. The production has not suffered either in quality or quantity and a great improvement is observable in the health and spirits of the men."

That was Russia—terrorised and tyrannical Russia. Perhaps they might apply that a little nearer home and try the experiment here. Then they had another large firm on the Thames, the Thames Ironworks, which had introduced the eight-hours day. He was not quite sure of his facts in regard to it, but he was inclined to believe it had turned out a success. At any rate, he remembered speaking to Mr. Hill on the subject some years ago, and he had told him that while he used to pay £99,000 a year in wages at the time they worked fifty-four hours, he now paid £242,000. That was the difference in five years. That might be taken to show that the eight-hours day had not killed trade. Of course, the mere increase in the wages bill, irrespective of any other consideration could not have any special attraction for employers, but this great increase in the wage bill had been accompanied by increased output at a decreased cost. Those who had any knowledge of Mr. Hill knew perfectly well that he might be relied upon with regard to anything he might have to say. He would like to get a little nearer a trade of which he had a better knowledge. There was in this country a society called the Co-operative Printing Society, with three branches, one in Manchester, one in Newcastle, and one in London. In these three branches they had nearly 1,000 hands employed. He had been a director of that committee now for ten or twelve years, and the experience that he had had there was sufficient to convince him of the practicability of the establishment of a forty-eight-hours week with fairness, and without any likely loss to those firms who might adopt it. They paid the highest wages paid in those trades—printing, lithographic printing, book-binding, and everything in connection with the printing trade—and in many instances they went considerably higher than the recognised rate. At the same time all employees throughout the works were granted a holiday each year of one, two, or three weeks, according to their position and the time they had been there, and the holidays were paid for. He would be better pleased if some other printing houses would take that view. Moreover, every year they had a bonus in wages, and all this was done on a forty-eight hours week, while other firms in Manchester were working fifty hours, in Newcastle fifty-one, and in London fifty-two and a half. It might be said that the co-operative society was subject to the same keen competition to be found in regard to other trades. Nearly every job that came into those printing offices was obtained by competition with other houses, who were working fifty-two to fifty-four hours per week. If the forty-eight hour week could be worked with success in this case it could also be worked in others. But here came the point. It might be asked why, if this could be done in these offices, they should come and trouble the House to obtain a forty-eight-hours week. It was very easy to explain. He did not find fault with employers as a class, but they were not all of a generous character. Each employer generally wanted as much as he could get out of his business. It was generally the greatest amount of work for the least amount of pay. So far as his union was concerned they knew perfectly well that before they could get a forty-eight hours week a large amount of money would be expended, and bitter feeling engendered, and the country would like, if possible, to prevent that being done. He was quite sure that if Gentlemen above the gangway had paid greater attention to social questions, whilst in power their ranks would not have been decimated in the manner they had been. There was plenty of room to take a hand in this, and show their sympathy with the workers. A member of the Institute of Civil Engineers said—

> "It is possible to combine shorter hours of labour at the full previous wages with an increase of net profits on capital, and without any increase in the selling price of the goods."

And the same speaker finished up by saying—

> "It is an undeniable fact that those who receive the highest remuneration give the least number of hours in return for it."

There was painful evidence of the truth of that statement. The weekly hours of public officials would not exceed thirty three if holidays were reckoned off. On the other hand, the best situated of the artisan class worked fifty-two to fifty-four hours per week, and they lost their pay if they had off time. There were other classes who worked sixty, seventy, eighty, or ninety hours per week. In London the wages of men who worked over ninety hours per week often did not exceed 17s. to 20s. That was a fact which should bring a blush to the face of anyone who hesitated to lend a hand in bringing about an eight-hours day. He and his friends made this request on the ground that if the proposal were carried out it would reduce the number of unemployed, as some men would be prevented from working long hours while others were starving. That was the main object they had in view in connection with the whole thing. He sincerely hoped that the House would show a kindly feeling towards the request.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when, in the interests of the workers generally, and in view of the present large number of unemployed, the working day in all trades and industries should be limited by law to a maximum of eight hours."—(*Mr. Clynes.*)

MR. MOND (Chester) said that so far as he was concerned the mover and seconder of the Motion had been preaching to the converted. His firm were certainly one of the pioneers of the eight-hours movement in respect of continuous work, and their experience had convinced them that so far as continuous work was concerned—work that went on both night and day—eight hours was long enough time for a man to do good work. Their experience had taught them that on account of the increased efficiency they could get out of men working eight-hours shifts, instead of twelve hours, even at the same rate of wages, or a slightly higher rate of wages, the reduction in the hours did not necessarily increase the cost of production. It seemed to him, therefore, that it was a very great pity that the mover and seconder of the Resolution had framed it in a manner which made it impossible for him and many who were in favour of a more general introduction of an eight-hours day to support it as it stood. Although the hon. Members had argued with some force on the case of a certain number of industries, and also on the case of a certain number of isolated facts, they had not demonstrated to the House how it would be possible, for instance, to apply a maximum eight-hours day to agricultural labourers and domestic servants, or to the whole of the large number of industries in which the labour was not carried on in a regular manner, as in a factory, hour after hour. If the hon. Members could have seen their way to amend the Resolution and to be satisfied for the present with an eight-hours day in all continuous work, he personally would have been ready to support them. But a good many of their arguments seemed to him to be intended more for the members of their own trade unions. As to the question of overtime, he was really surprised at the attitude taken up on the Labour Benches. Overtime was really the great joy of the trade union worker. [Cries of "No."] Certainly. Most employers spent a great deal of their time in trying to avoid overtime. It was almost a perpetual struggle.

MR. CLYNES: May I point out that at the last Trade Union Congress, and at other similar gatherings of the representatives of labour, the system of overtime was absolutely condemned?

MR. MOND said he did not doubt that, but a great many resolutions were passed at these congresses which received very little attention from the members of the unions. Surely it was in the power of trade unions to prohibit men from working overtime. Surely no one with practical experience would tell him that there was not a large percentage of men who liked to work overtime, whenever they got the opportunity, because they got larger wages. He knew that among Labour leaders it had been very much discouraged, but he wondered if all the members of the unions knew that under this proposal they were only to work eight hours, and that there was to be no overtime with extra pay, how many would be anxious to support the Resolution. There was one point on which certainly the Resolution and the arguments which had been used in support of it seemed to him to be contradictory, and that was the question of unemployment. They had been assured and he agreed to a certain extent that a reduction in hours did not necessarily mean a smaller output per man. As a matter of fact, they might with a smaller number of hours get equal or greater efficiency.

MR. CLYNES: In the case of trades where machinery is used.

MR. MOND said that that was so, but he went further. Surely it was a short-sighted view of the unemployed question to hang it on the hours question. After all, the main factor in unemployment was population. If every man in the country was employed to-morrow, and if the population went on increasing, they would soon have a number of unemployed. Were they going to reduce the number of hours from eight to six, from six to four, from four to two, as the population increased, in order to deal with the problem of the unemployed, for that was the logical outcome of the argument? He did not think that that was an argument that could be very successfully pursued. He was told the other day of a case in connection with some carpenters. A gentleman who was employing seven trade unionists wanted to work them on short time instead of dismissing some and working the others on full time. The people who objected were the trade unionists, who were anxious that the three should be turned out of work and that the other four should work full time. On a great many of these questions he thought the trade union rules of to-day were antiquated and wanted revising. The whole overtime question wanted to be taken in hand in a much more serious way than it has been in many industries. One of the great difficulties in connection with the engineering industry was the question of working double shifts. He knew some cases where double shifts could have been worked, but it had been made impossible because the trade union rules would not allow them to employ two sets of men on shifts of eight hours each at the ordinary rate, but insisted that the second set should be paid at overtime rates. Hon. Gentlemen should address themselves to these questions of which they were fully aware and overhaul a great many of their own regulations which were now out of date, and by altering which they could achieve a great many of the objects they all had in view without coming to this House in order to try to impose a kind of penal Act of Parliament, while not showing how it was to be carried out. The great difficulty was how to carry out this proposal. If they were to have millions of inspectors going about checking the hour book of every workman in the country, who was to be punished if the eight hours were exceeded? Were the employers to be fined and the workmen put in prison? How were they to carry out the enormous undertaking of a legal maximum in varying conditions? Were they to put an inspector on every hansom cab in order to find whether the driver had worked eight hours or eight hours and a half? Sympathetic as they must all be, and convinced as he was himself that the eight-hours movement must and would come along, a general Resolution of this kind, although it might sound well at a Trade Union Congress, was not one which he himself would recommend the House of Commons to place on its records. They had been too fond in the past of placing abstract Resolutions on their records without thinking how they were going to carry them into effect. They thereby awakened expectations in the country which afterwards they could not carry out. He thought that was a very bad thing. They ought not to pass Resolutions unless they saw their way to carry them into legislative effect, and neither the proposer nor the seconder had outlined in the slightest degree how he would draft a Bill to carry the Resolution into effect, and how he would convince the workmen he represented that it would be workable. For these reasons he would certainly vote against the Resolution if it went to a division.

*MR. W. H. LEVER (Cheshire, Wirral) said that he also was unable to vote for the Resolution, although strongly in favour of the principle of an eight-hours day. He much regretted that the mover and seconder of the Resolution had not given the House some enlightenment as to how they would apply such a very far-reaching principle. With all they had said of the beneficial effects of an eight-hours day he cordially agreed, both from his reading and from his own experience; and he was certain that in all sections of the House there were employers who shared his opinion. But the House had not been told a great deal that it ought to have been told as to the proposal to enact short time for the whole of the workers of the country. If they were going to limit the hours universally to eight per day it would raise the whole question of wages. Eight hours a day, which, as he considered it, ought to be arranged for, would mean forty-eight hours work in the week, while the worker would receive the same pay as he received for working fifty or fifty-two hours. Anything less than that would be simply equivalent to short time. Further, if such an Act was passed by this House, and any trade, by their own volition, preferred to continue to work a greater number of hours than forty-eight in the week, was the penalty to fall on the employer alone, or on both the employer and the workmen? [An HON. MEMBER: It is to fall on both.] All the references to the subject which he had seen generally proposed that the employer alone should be penalised? [An HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: Both must be penalised.] In that case the House would, in a very light mood, be creating a law which would make law-breakers of both the employers and the employees in the vast majority of industries where an eight-hours day would be impossible. He did not think that the supporters of the Resolution seriously proposed that such a law should come into operation. Moreover, such an Act of Parliament would undermine the trade unions of the country. He was a convinced trade unionist; he believed that combinations amongst workmen were not only necessary and desirable, but the only means of giving voice to the workers. But such an Act of Parliament would group all workers together, and he was convinced that the workers did not wish to be grouped together. They had a scheme in the building trade in his neighbourhood by which the men worked forty-two and a half hours a week in the winter months, and fifty-two or fifty-four hours per week in the summer months; but such a scheme would be destroyed if universal forty-eight hours work per week were made compulsory. The question of shifts had been referred to. He agreed that in all continuous work the rule should be that no man should work too long a shift, and that the shifts should be divided into three sections of eight hours each. That was an easy matter, and would not affect any other trade. As to railway men, when he heard statements about their working eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, was reference made to employment at wayside stations where there was one station-master and one porter, four or five trains a day, with sometimes not a single passenger, and not many with luggage? There was an illustration of the difficulty of making a hard and fast line of an eight-hours day. There were industries where eight hours was more than a full day's work, which a man could perform, but there were other industries where the work was in the open air and where the duty was such that they could work for more than eight hours a day. As to the bogey of foreign competition, so far from any danger arising as the result of beneficial legislation or arrangements adopted by individual trade unions, they need not fear foreign competition. The one trade which was in the most deplorable conditions to-day in the United Kingdom was the building trade, and that was a trade which was never affected by foreign competition. There was no country in the world where the employer worked so well with his men and felt with them so much as in this country. During the last fifty years the hours of labour had, by friendly arrangement between the employer and his workman, been reduced from twelve to eleven, from eleven to ten, from ten to nine, and now they stood at eight-and-a-half, and he hoped it would shortly come to eight hours. He thought this policy of friendly arrangement should be continued, and that there was nowadays too great a tendency to come to the House of Commons and ask the House to make bargains for the whole country. The House could only legislate on broad lines, whereas trade unions could make their relations with the employers in accordance to their own individual and collective requirements. They should continue to work along these lines, instead of appealing to Parliament for legislation which would make a large number of people law-breakers. It was on these lines that he believed that they would be able to lift the workmen of the country to the highest pinnacle of any workman in any country in the world.

*MR. MACPHERSON (Preston) said the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had again expressed, as they had heard recently expressed in other directions, sympathy with the trade union movement, while at the same time stating that the proposals emanating from the Labour Benches would be most decidedly injurious to the trade union movement. They welcomed sympathy, but he could assure the hon. Gentleman and his friends that the trade union movement could take care of itself. They did not say that any social problem could be solved in a simple manner, but they did say that it was the duty of statesmen to attempt to solve all problems connected with the social condition of the people. Trade unionists were most interested in this question, and had tried to solve it with reference to their own members. They had made proposals to their employers, which had been rejected and almost thrown back in their teeth. He represented the steel-smelting industry, and they had converted the members of their unions in different parts of the country to make a personal sacrifice of wages so that they could put an eight-hours day into operation. At a conference with the employers held in Newcastle-on-Tyne, a proposal by the trade union was made to the employers that instead of running two shifts of twelve hours each as at present, they should run three shifts of eight hours each, and that the present earnings of two shifts should be divided between the three shifts. The union guaranteed to the employers that this arrangement would not increase the cost of production by one cent. They showed the employers that that principle was in operation in South Wales and on the North-East coast of England, yet the employers, when the men were prepared to sacrifice 33 per cent. of their wages for an eight-hours day, had not sufficient faith in the success of their industry under these conditions, and refused to accept the proposals. If this arrangement were followed in his own trade in the North-East of England and the West of Scotland, it would instantly absorb 1,500 more men into the industry, and thus be a factor in dealing with unemployment. It should be remembered that they were not that evening introducing a Bill, but only a Resolution which affirmed a principle which they on the Labour Benches thought was necessary for the welfare of the industrial community. He would remind hon. Members of the progress they were making in production and in the extension of machinery. The Lancashire textile trade had just perfected a piece of machinery by means of which one man operating was going to throw six men on the labour market. In all branches of trade to-day machinery was decreasing labour and sending men on the streets where they were idle. What was the result? Men drifted into our distributive trades which did not depend upon machinery. There was therefore a larger capacity in the distributive trades to absorb unemployment than in any other industry. He believed that if business men would apply their business capacity, if the statesman would apply his statesmanship, the difficulty of the agricultural labourer and of the domestic servant could be overcome, if they put into the human side of industry the same amount and the same capacity of thought that they put into merely the percentage and dividend side of it. They heard a lot in the country and in this House about the interests of capital and labour being identical. But if they were, why this contest over an eight-hours day? If the interests of capital and labour were identical, why was the pathway of reform ever the pathway of conflict? He appealed to the House of Commons not to dismiss this Resolution in a light manner or to throw it in any shape or form contemptuously on one side. He appealed to them to accept the Resolution simply as a statement of principle which if it was ever embodied in a Bill could have its weaknesses indicated both inside and outside the House. They wanted the workers of the country not to be the beasts of burden that they had been up to now, and as their altitude of life increased and as their education increased their needs would increase and would demand a reduction of their hours of labour. He therefore hoped that the House would accept the Resolution and that in the near future something would be done to give effect to it.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said it was quite true as the hon. Member for Preston had told them, that this was not a Bill, but it was a very definite Resolution. It was a Resolution declaring: "That in the opinion of this House the time has arrived when in the interests of the workers generally and in view of the present large number of unemployed, the working day in all trades and industries should be limited by law to a maximum of eight hours." The seconder of the Resolution had spoken of a forty-eight hours week, but if we were to preserve the happy custom in this country of having a Saturday afternoon holiday it would not be a forty-eight hours week, but a forty-four or forty-five hours week. Otherwise the Saturday afternoon would go, because under the Resolution the working day was to be limited to eight hours in every day. [Cries of "No no."] His hon. friends had not read the Resolution or they would find that the working day was to be limited to a maximum of eight hours. They were asked to vote that Parliament should pass a law that no man should work more than eight hours at any trade or occupation in the United Kingdom on any one day out of the 365. He had had the pleasure if he might say so of opposing hon. Members opposite when they had made proposals to the House on previous occasions, but he would go so far in accord with them as to say that he was perfectly willing to admit as a principle that there were cases in which it was desirable and justifiable that the State should regulate the hours of labour. He was not one of those who drew a hard and fast line and said that the State should never regulate the hours of labour. He thought cases might arise in which that was the most convenient way of arriving at a working rule. He sympathised with what his hon. friend had just said in dealing with the case of the steel-smelters and their condition. The hon. Member had said that although his union had offered to reduce wages in order to get a three-shift day instead of a two-shift day the employers would not give way. That reminded him of the story of a bishop who came late at a certain meeting, and said he had been bitten by a mad dog, whereupon Sydney Smith said he should like to hear the dog's account of the story. He agreed that it would be well that the smelter whose labour was very hard should not work more than eight hours a day, but it did not follow from that that a porter at a country railway station should work only eight hours a day. If justice was aimed at, what was the reason for limiting these two classes of men, the intensity of whose work was so different, to exactly eight hours a day each? There was one point upon which he thought that employers and trade unions should co-operate to get a better condition of things, and that was with regard to work before breakfast. It had always seemed to him to be one of the most unfortunate features in the industrial system of this country that a man should have to do an hour and a half or two hours labour before breakfast when he was not able to put forward his full strength, and if employers and employed would co-operate so as to get one break in the day instead of two, he thought it would be an advantage all round. But even on this point, one could not dogmatise, as there was the wife to consider and her unwillingness to get up in order to prepare her husband's breakfast. Was the hon. Member for Clitheroe prepared to say that henceforth no one in the cotton trade should work more than eight hours a day? If he did, it was a very serious statement to make, because it was the most important and valuable of our export trades, and it lived on the narrowest margin of profit. He could not conceive any greater madness than for the House to say, without going into details, that in future this enormous industry should have its hours reduced to eight hours a day, or forty-four or forty-five hours a week. If men in this country were only to work eight hours, how was the regulation to be enforced? Were they going to send a policeman all round the country to see that the new small holders did not work more than eight hours a day? What was to happen to the beasts if they fell ill? Were they to remain in the fields and die, because the man who looked after them had done his eight hours work? That reminded him of the story of some of the London unemployed who were sent down to work in the country, and were horrified to find that there was no Saturday half-holiday and that the beasts wanted food on Sundays as well as on week-days. He was quite certain that every Member on that side of the House was as anxious to get the working-day reduced as any hon. Member opposite, but Liberals did not accept the fallacy that by making an eight-hours day and reducing the hours of labour they could make room for an unlimited number of the unemployed. That fallacy was based on the assumption that wages were drawn from the pockets of the well-to-do classes. Hon. Members forgot that the wages were produced by the workman himself, and that ultimately each workman had to make his own wages and a little bit over to bear the cost of the business. [Ironical LABOUR cries of: A little bit over.] Sometimes a little bit over, sometimes a big bit over, and sometimes nothing at all. If hon. Members were going on the assumption that by reducing the number of hours, they could make two men do one man's work they would find ultimately that two men would have one man's pay. It was conceivable that, by passing a Bill, they might make railway companies, who were bound by their obligations to the State, decrease the hours of labour of their servants at the expense of dividends. The same might be said in the case of tramway servants. But such a transference of wealth from one class to another by Act of Parliament would be an extremely arbitrary proceeding, and would in effect create a privileged class. Taking our industries as a whole no such proceeding was possible. The employer was not a man who provided wages out of his own bottomless pocket. He had to secure from his customers the wages he paid, and in nine cases out of ten his customers were themselves working men. The employer was in fact the go-between between one set of workmen and another set of workmen, so that in effect the workmen of this country were their own employers. The share of wealth that went to them might well be increased, and that of the capitalist decreased, but how were they to do that? The only way was by increasing the supply of capital which would make it cheaper, and the fault of most of the proposals from the other side was to make capital scarce and dearer. The ultimate solution was for the workers themselves to accumulate capital and become capitalists and wage-earners at the same time.

*MR. NICHOLLS (Northamptonshire, N.) said that from the speeches they had listened to from both sides he thought there was a point in this Resolution up to which all of them could agree, but he was bound to say that when he came to that little word "all" he had to part company with his friends on that side of the House. Even at trade congresses it seemed to him that the agricultural labourers had been seldom thought of, or anything said about them, but, after all, they were a very large section of what they might call industrial workmen, and hon. Members must know that this Motion could not be applied to all classes of labour, for example, such as the work of the agricultural labourer. At the best the principle for which his hon. friends were contending could only be applied to certain special industries in the large manufacturing towns. He would not say anything about the miners who had fought their case and won their right for an eight-hours day. The railwaymen also had shown that they had been kept too long at their duty. The men on the tramways might also be dealt with by the Resolution, together with all Government workers, and he was bound to say that he believed when men worked fewer hours probably more men would be employed, and something done to solve the question of unemployment. He did not part company with his friends upon that point, but they had to face these difficulties. Let them take the case of a horsekeeper, whose hours, as a rule, lasted from 5.30 a.m. until 6 p.m. If hon. Members tied this man down to an eight-hours day, then it was needful that in some portion of the day's work he should be resting. Another case was that of the small landholder, who in the spring time was in the midst of his seeding operations and could not be told that he must not work more than the stipulated time contained in this Motion. In his opinion the Motion contained a bad principle as far as these men were concerned, and, if hon. Members were to say that the eight-hours day should apply to agriculture as well as to other industries, and that even in the busy season they should not be allowed to work extra hours to earn more money, the labourers would kick them. However dull a person the agricultural labourer might look, he liked a little bit of freedom all the same, especially when there was a chance of earning something extra. Then there was work in the fields in the hay season, work at which he had been engaged from 5 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night—much too long hours he admitted. Workers in agriculture knew well that there were certain times in the year when they could not earn enough for food, and when the opportunity arose to work longer at other times these labourers were willing to earn extra pay in order to help them to tide over the periods of stress and difficulty. Through the harvest the same thing happened. But what was this Resolution going to do? It was going to say that agricultural labourers were not to start before 7 in the morning, and if they had an hour's rest at mid-day were to leave off at 4 in the afternoon. If an agricultural labourer was compelled to have an eight-hours day, he could not be allowed to go on his allotment after working hours, for he would be told that it was the same industry at which he had been engaged all day long, that having tied himself down to eight hours a day he must not attend to his allotment, but give some other man the job to manage it for him. He, therefore, believed that the agricultural labourers did not want the eight-hours day. If they were in the House they would say for themselves, "We do not want it, and we are not going to have it," but as they could not be present, he was there to say that for them.

MR. H. J. WILSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth) said the business with which he was connected established the eight-hours system some years ago, and they had found it made no difference to them. He did not think they had either gained or lost by it, and he was sure it had been an enormous advantage to those employed. They were better in every way. They were healthier and more ready for work, and there was more goodwill about than before. As had been pointed out, however, the Resolution was of a most sweeping character. The mover had pointed to trades in which terribly, and he might almost say wickedly, long hours prevailed. For instance, the conductors of the omnibuses by which some hon. Members went home worked, he was told, in some cases sixteen hours a day, and had to walk to and from their homes, making really sixteen and a half or seventeen hours a day. He was sure there was not a man in the House who would justify that state of things, or who would not be glad to see it altered. He asked the Labour Members, however, whether the object would not be better obtained by limiting the number of hours, say, to twelve, in the first place, and so dealing with it by degrees. Our factory legislation, he would point out, was not reached at once, but by stages, and so it was with sanitary legislation. He asked hon. Members at least to show good reason why it would not be more feasible and more practicable to limit hours of working by degrees.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): We agree in the main with hon. Members who have taken part in this debate to-night and who have said that it is impossible to ask the House to accept so sweeping and unqualified a proposal. The hours of every trade regardless of its conditions, cannot be dealt with by a sudden and large restriction such as is proposed, and since every Member knows that effect could not be given to it by legislation, a Resolution of this kind ought not to be placed on the records of the House. But to say that is not to deny that a shortening of the hours of labour in many cases is desirable or that the State could do nothing to effect the shortening of the hours. Some years ago the Royal Commission on Labour, which sat under the presidency of the Duke of Devonshire, took evidence extending over a period of some years with regard to the condition of the working classes. Among that evidence was much that related to the hours of labour in various occupations. That evidence showed that the majority of the English working classes worked ten hours or more, that a considerable number worked eleven hours, and not a few worked twelve hours a day. Since that time probably no very great alteration has been effected in the conditions. It is notorious that many classes of labour are grievously overworked, and that shop assistants, employees in public-houses, vanmen, carters, and persons engaged in many other trades work hours which are excessive. Hundreds and thousands of men and women day by day go to their work in the early hours of the morning, and return to their homes late at night, exhausted by their labour, with few intervals of repose beyond the Sunday rest, and even that is sometimes denied. In the constant endeavour to obtain the means of livelihood they find their lives absorbed and lost. They have no opportunity for self-education or recreation, for enjoying family life or undertaking the duties of citizenship. This is not merely an individual loss to them; it must be regarded as a national evil. Of the population of this country four-fifths belong to the labour classes, and the nation cannot be great if a large proportion of them are degraged. The hon. Member who moved the Resolution made a remarkably able and thoughtful speech, but I think the House will scarcely agree with him and those who spoke in support of the Motion in the argument that in a general and permanent reduction of hours of labour will be found any effective solution of the problem of unemployment. It is perfectly true that a temporary reduction of hours in a time of trade depression may spread the sacrifice which falls upon the industrial community over a larger area. Instead of a few men being thrown out of work altogether and being reduced to extreme poverty, a large number of men make a sacrifice and work lesser hours for a lessened payment. Arrangements of that kind are eminently desirable between employers and employed in order to diminish suffering and loss, but I venture to suggest to hon. Members opposite that, if they think a permanent reduction of the hours of labour to eight hours will in the long run increase employment, they have fallen into a very old economical fallacy. The solution of this great difficulty is not to be found on those lines. In the first place, as has been pointed out in this debate, a reduction of hours of labour does not necessarily mean a reduction of production. The same number of men may do as much more work in less hours, and in that case it is obvious there is no room for the unemployed, for there is no demand for additional labour. But suppose the opposite case, where the same amount of work per man is not done in the shortened hours. Let me take a simple illustration. Take the case of tramwaymen. In this industry if you reduce the number of hours you will require a correspondingly increased number of employees to perform the work. Supposing, for example, you have 1,000 tramwaymen employed twelve hours per day and their hours are reduced to eight hours. The obvious and immediate effect is you will require 500 more men to do the same work. That is the immediate and obvious effect which hon. Member's see and emphasise. If you employ 1,500 men where previously you employed 1,000, you have, they say, gone far to solve the problem. But there is an indirect and less obvious, but not less certain effect. These 500 men must be paid from somewhere. Their remuneration does not descend from heaven. They will cost, say at 30s. per week, some £40,000. That £40,000 is an additional expense, not to bring about any increased production or an additional service, but an additional expense merely to pay for the service previously performed by 1,000 men working twelve hours a day. The £40,000 must either be obtained from increased fares, or decreased profits, or subsidies from the rates, and from whatever source it comes it must throw out of employment a corresponding number of men in other directions. That £40,000 represents a demand for labour, a certain bulk of commodities, now devoted to the maintenance of 500 tramwaymen. It had previously gone to the maintenance of some other body of men. You give employment to additional men in one direction, but inevitably in the long run you must be reducing employment, and throwing men out of employment in another. The fact may be made abundantly clear by carrying the argument to its logical conclusion. If a reduction of hours from ten to eight will bring into employment a large additional number of men, so will a further reduction of hours from eight till six. The process can thus be continued till you reach the absurd conclusion that, if only the working-class work one hour per day instead of ten, we shall be able to support in prosperity and comfort ten times the population we do now. It may be desirable—I do not say it is not—in the case of the tramwaymen working twelve hours per day to reduce their hours. Obviously that is a change which should be accomplished, but, although desirable, it is, as a means of settling the unemployment problem, useless and delusive. If the working classes set their hopes upon this method of solution, they are treading upon wrong lines and towards a goal wholly unattainable. There is no sound economist who will sanction the doctrine contained in this Resolution that a general reduction of the hours of labour can be relied upon to solve the problem of unemployment.

Nevertheless a reduction of hours and an extension of leisure are obviously desirable in themselves, and what this House has to consider on this and similar occasions is how far it is legitimate and practicable for the State to intervene to secure them. One of the most remarkable features of the debate has been that not one Member has risen from any quarter of the House to lay down the old doctrine that in no case should the State interfere to fix the hours of adult labour.

SIR F. BANBURY: I will.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The hon. Member has hitherto been silent. I noticed his absence and his silence with much surprise. Had this debate taken place sixty years ago, the whole evening would have been spent in discussing whether it was on any occasion legitimate to use the power of the law to interfere in contracts between master and employed and fix hours of labour of those who are assumed to be capable of looking after themselves. This change of attitude which has been so remarkably exemplified to-night has been due to the fact that we have come to regard the principles of liberty in a somewhat different light. The hon. Member for the City of London is, I think, the only Member left in the House who retains the old view. Even the hon. Member for Preston has deserted him. Some years ago he wrote a very able and cogent book, in collaboration with Mr. Sydney Webb, strenuously advocating a general eight-hours day, to be established by Act of Parliament. The hon. Member for the City of London, I think, has never written such a book, and is probably never likely to do so. He still adheres to the old individualistic doctrine of the sacredness of liberty, and by liberty he means the absence of legal interference. But does the hon. Baronet really think when men work twelve hours a day for six days a week they work those hours because they want to? There may be other forms of compulsion besides legal compulsion. There is the compulsion of economic conditions. There are few people now who deny that the restrictions of the Factory Acts extend liberty. They do not stop people from doing what they want to do, but prevent people being compelled to do what they do not want to do. And so it is in the case of other regulations limiting the hours of labour.

It is quite true, as has been urged by the supporters of this Motion, that frequently and in many trades a short day can be established without any cost to anyone. The production in an eight-hours day is as great as it was in the longer day. That has been remarkably shown by the experience of the Government Departments. In 1894, when the present Prime Minister was Secretary of State for War the hours of labour in the War Office establishments were reduced by an average of five and three-quarter hours per week; some 20,000 work-people had their hours reduced to that extent. An inquiry made by the Board of Trade after an interval of ten years showed that this had been done without any reduction of wages and without any extra cost to the public; and the production at the War

Office establishments in an eight-hours day, in a forty-eight hours week, was roughly just the same as it had been in previous years when hours of labour were fifty-three and three-quarters per week. The experience of a large number of private firms has of course been the same. It is obvious that the man who begins his work after an evening's leisure, after a good night's rest, and after a meal in the morning, works briskly and persistently and may be expected to do much more than the man who goes to his labour hungry and already tired. But although this may be the rule in many instances, the House cannot assume that the rule will universally apply and that this will always be so in all trades. It has been found from returns supplied to the Board of Trade that an eight-hours day has been established in private firms for only 60,000 work-people in fourteen years. The movement towards an eight-hours-day in private industry has been exceedingly slow. If it were the case that equal production could generally be obtained in shorter hours of labour we might have expected that this process of reduction would have been far more rapid than in practice it has been found to be. It is obvious, when we come to particular industries, that we cannot expect that shorter hours will result in an equal measure of work. Hon. Members opposite have said that the House is discussing a Resolution and that there is no Bill before us. But there has been a Bill before this House, emanating from hon. Member's opposite and introduced in this Parliament each session by the hon. Member for South-West Ham. The purpose of it is the same as this Resolution. The Bill would establish a rigid eight-hours day in every employment on sea and land without any exception and without any exemptions for any circumstances other than actual accident. The penalty on any employer who employed any person for a longer period would be a fine of not less than £100 for each offence. Let us take certain staple trades, some of which have been mentioned. Take, for example, agriculture, the textile trade, shipping, and domestic service. There are four great branches of industry, employing about one-third of the population. Mark how impracticable it would be by a stroke of the pen to enforce any such rigid rule in such cases. In agriculture, for example, as the hon. Member for Northamptonshire has illustrated, it would be utterly impracticable to apply rigid hours of labour. Nature pays no regard whatever to Acts of Parliament. She is totally disrespectful of our laws. You cannot bring the seasons before a Court of Summary Jurisdiction. To suppose that you can establish a rigid eight-hours day for agricultural labourers in an industry which in every country and in every age has always had irregular periods of employment necessarily varying with the seasons, is to flout the intelligence of the House. Then with regard to the textile trades, it may be possible gradually to secure a further reduction of the hours of labour, but at one blow to strike off a seventh—for that would be the result of reducing hours from fifty-six to forty-eight—of the productive time of the whole cotton and woollen industry—an industry continually faced by very close and dangerous foreign competition and which in the case of the cotton trade sends some three-quarters of its whole products to foreign markets in competition with foreign manufacturers—to suppose that, is to imagine a change which every Member knows cannot be carried into effect by one single step. Then again, take the case of shipping. An eight-hours day established in the shipping industry would involve an increase of 50 per cent. in the cost of manning our ships, an overwhelmingly heavy change. Lastly, with regard to domestic service, an intermittent employment, there is no possibility in practice of enforcing any such State regulations. I venture to think if hon. Gentleman opposite below the Gangway were on this side of the House instead of that, and if their leaders were seated on this bench instead of on that, and if the hon. Member for South-West Ham were now Home Secretary, he would not lay before the House the Bill which has been proposed with the authority of the Independent Labour Party, and he would find that a measure of that sort would not seem so practicable and feasible viewed from this corner of the House as viewed from that. There are two lines of action on which it is possible and practicable for the State to proceed.

In the first place, it is clearly the duty of the Government to make its own employment a model employment. That principle has long been accepted by the House and acted upon by different Governments, and in the War Office, in the Admiralty, in the Post Office, and in all the cases in which the rule is practicable an eight-hours day has already been established by administrative action. Farther than that, the State can in many ways take steps to get rid of the worst evils of excessive hours in private industry. The Factory Acts have that in view. They have been successful in removing the worst abuses of the over-work of women and children. The Factory Act of 1895 enabled the Home Secretary to reduce also the hours of labour of adult males engaged in dangerous processes and that power has been used in various trades. The Railway Servants' Hours of Labour Act has proceeded on the same lines, and has, I think, been effectively enforced. The Early Closing of Shops Act has had the same purpose in view and has achieved some good, but as the Home Secretary has announced, that Act clearly wants strengthening, and it should be the duty of Parliament to carry its methods further. And this year we are asking the House to take the longest step forward that will yet have been taken for the limitation of excessive hours of labour in the Mines Eight Hours Bill. It is often thought that already the great majority of miners underground are employed for eight hours or less, but that is not the case. Of the 700,000 workers employed underground three fourths now work more than eight hours, and many of them work very excessive hours. In Lancashire the ordinary hours of hewers below ground are nine and a half, and other workers ten and a half.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): How many days a week:

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: That does not alter the fact. It is not surprising that being called upon to work excessive hours they take certain days of the week as holidays, and that is one of the reasons why the opposition to this Bill must be regarded as exaggerated, seeing that the opponents of the Bill have never made allowance for the fact that under the eight-hours day the hours of work will be distributed more reasonably and regularly. In South Wales again the hours underground are ten and a half a day. In these cases there are clearly very excessive hours worked. The opposition to which I have just referred is based upon the most exaggerated estimate of the possible cost of introducing the eight-hours day in mines. I have sat behind the Home Secretary when he has received deputation after deputation presenting in the most gloomy terms the disastrous effects of carrying this legislation. All these deputations base their case upon the assumption that a permanent increased cost of coal would follow, of from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a ton—a fantastic estimate based on no facts whatever and supported by no argument, an absurd exaggeration of the probable or even the possible effects of passing the Mines Eight Hours Bill, borne out in no degree by the findings of the Committee which examined the economic effects of establishing the eight-hours day. However, to-night, it is not my task to argue the merits of the Mines Eight Hours Bill. I only wish to make it clear to the House in connection with this Resolution that it is the intention of the Government in this session of Parliament to proceed actively with this Bill, and though some Amendments in matters of detail may be needed, we trust that we shall be able to secure this year for a very large class of men engaged in exceptionally arduous, dangerous and unattractive labour, that larger leisure which we agree with Members who have moved the Resolution is one of the first conditions of a satisfactory life.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Certainly when I came down to the House I had not intended to intervene in the debate, but I am urged to occupy the time of the House for a very few minutes by the interesting address of the Under-Secretary. I did not quite make out whether that speech was intended to be one in favour of an eight-hours Bill for miners or one against an eight-hours Bill for anybody else. It was a most curious speech. He gave us in very terse and powerful language an argument to show that the great textile industries ought certainly not to be limited to eight hours, because he said, they had to meet foreign competition of a very serious character, and if you limit the output of those industries, as you would limit it by reducing the hours from ten to eight, they would not be able to meet their rivals in neutral and in foreign markets. Then he turns to the coal trade and tells us quite incorrectly, I think, that the coal trade is a specially dangerous trade. That is not found to be the case by the Report of the Commission.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W): They found it was a healthy trade, but they never said it was not dangerous.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That it is a trade to which there are occasionally great risks attached, and in which great tragedies occur we all know, unhappily by recent and painful experience, but I certainly understood that the average of life in that trade was a good average of life, comparing extremely favourably with the lives of operatives engaged in other industries. I am talking of the length of life where life is brought to a conclusion by disease or by accident, and if you take length of life as a test of the desirability of a profession, I believe coal mining is a healthy trade, and that those engaged in it have more than the ordinary expectation of life which attaches to operatives in other trades. The hon. Gentleman comes down and tells us that this trade, unlike the textile trade, is one which ought to have special consideration, and with a singular want of appropriateness he drags in a defence of the Bill which the Government will have to defend at length later in the session when he is engaged in arguing against limiting the hours in other trades; because when you limit the hours of labour you diminish the output, and when you limit the output you diminish efficiency, and when you diminish efficiency you diminish the power of competing with rivals in other markets, is there no foreign market for coal? He knows well enough that there is a large and increasing foreign market for coal, in which this country has to suffer great competition. The Government of which the hon. Gentleman is a Member boasts that, when they repealed the coal duty, they enabled the coal trade to compete more effectively in these foreign markets than they could when the coal duty was imposed. I fail altogether to understand how the same hon. Gentleman can get up and give his views on the economics of an Eight-Hours Bill, showing how absolutely injurious it is, not merely to the trade, but to the operatives engaged in the trade, when he is dealing with agriculture, the textile industry and other great staple manufactures, and then turn round and tell us at the end of his speech, without a shadow of justification, that there is one trade which escapes from the net of this argument, which gets through the meshes of the dialectic with which he has instructed and entertained the House in the earlier part of his speech, and that is the coal trade. I think when he was dealing with this question on the broad lines which he adopted, the least he could do was to show in what relevant respect the coal trade, for which he proposed to legislate, differs from the other trades which hon. Members below the Gangway have taken under their protection. One other observation, and only one shall I make to the House. The hon. Gentleman in an interesting parenthesis in the middle of his speech told us that not a single Member of the House, except my hon. colleague in the representation of the City of London, had suggested that it was not desirable or competent to deal with the hours of male adult labour. I listened with pain and surprise to the hon. Gentleman. I thought he was an economist of the old school. I thought he carried on the traditions of Adam Smith, Ricardo, James Mill, John Mill, Bright, and Cobden.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Heaven forbid! There are very few of us to-day who share the hostility to interfering with the regulation of labour which was entertained by the Manchester school. As the Duke of Argyll said in one of his books some time ago, it was one of the most valuable discoveries of economic science in the nineteenth century that, while it is essential to limit by law the conditions of labour, it is disastrous to limit by law the movements of trade.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There is another discovery which will come home to the mind and conscience of the hon. Gentleman before he is much older. The doctrine which he now thanks Heaven he does not share was really part of a system, not an isolated opinion on the part of the eminent men whose names I have quoted, but it was part of a general system of *laissez faire*, of which those particular forms of fiscal orthodoxy which he believes were a part, but only a part. It was a large, coherent, and logical system. The hon. Gentleman not only rejected, but rejected with contumely and contempt, that part of it. He thanks Heaven he is not as they were. He separates himself from these distinguished individualists and advocates of freedom as they understood it, not with regret but with triumph. I cannot help thinking that when the hon. Gentleman has carried his studies still further, he will see that there are other points in which the doctrines of those eminent men required modification, and he may discover that the differences which separate him from hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House are not so profound as he appears, at all events on the platform, occasionally to imagine.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said the criticisms against the Resolution seemed to overlook the fact that it was not a Bill. In the Session of 1893–4 the present President of the Local Government Board introduced a general Eight-Hours Bill almost as comprehensive as this Resolution, on behalf of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Congress of which he was then a member. They were justified in specifying no trades, because they did not wish discussion to centre round objections on behalf of any particular trade, and the value of the discussion to be lost. The speech of the Under-Secretary had made clear the intention of the Government to pass this session the Mines (Eight-Hours) Bill. If they had raised this discussion for no other purpose, in view of what had been going on in the country and the suggestions in the Press, it was a great satisfaction that they had got from the hon. Gentleman that declaration. That was a great satisfaction to those who supported this resolution. Another interesting result of the debate was the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, in which the right hon. Gentleman revealed that one more article in the social programme of 1894, which very largely assisted the Conservative Party to power, had been discarded. One of the most important items in the programme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, and supported by the late Lord Salisbury, was an eight-hours day for miners, and after having used that item in that programme for vote-catching purposes they were in 1908 to be told—for that was the only interpretation which could be put upon the speech of the Leader of the Opposition to which they had just listened—that this item was no longer in the programme of the Party which the right hon. Gentleman represented. If the debate had done nothing more than make it clear, on the one hand, that this item was no longer in the Unionist social programme, and on the other hand, that the Government intended to make themselves responsible for the introduction this session of the Miners (Eight Hours) Bill, those sitting on the Labour Benches were satisfied, and these two points had made the debate full of interest. In view of the declaration of the Government in regard to the Eight Hours Bill for miners, he advised his hon. friend to withdraw the Motion. [UNIONIST laughter.] If hon. Gentlemen above the gangway thought they were going to divide the Government and the Labour Party on this question they were mistaken. They were as short-sighted on this matter as the Government were in the division on Friday. If the Government would hold to their promise the Labour Party would assist them in passing that measure into law during the present session. He appealed to his hon. friend to be content with the discussion which had taken place and withdraw his Resolution.

MR. CLYNES said he had no desire to shirk a division, but in view of the very definite declaration with respect to a Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, and the many expressions of sympathy in regard to the application of the same principle to other trades and industries he asked leave to withdraw his Resolution.

SIR F. BANBURY objected to the Motion being withdrawn. It was an extremely important Motion, and the House of Commons should have the courage to show whether they were in favour or against it. He had listened carefully to the speech made by the Under-Secretary, and he could hardly make head or tail of it. The hon. Member said that he (the speaker) was the only Member of the House who held the views he did, and that now even the Member for Preston had deserted him, and he gave as his authority the fact that the Member for Preston had written a book dealing with Socialism. The hon. Member for Preston said he had now changed all the views he then held, because experience had taught him he was wrong. He had come to the conclusion that the book he wrote eighteen years ago did not represent his opinions now, and his hon. friend and himself were still united upon every subject with the exception of free trade, but even on that he still held out hopes that he would be able to convert him.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he would like to give the House the benefit of some calculations he had made as to the proportion of the hours in his life a man would be allowed to work if this Resolution were made law. A man's expectation of life was about forty-six years. Of these twelve were in childhood, and four illness and old age, leaving thirty years of work. Allowing for Saturday afternoons there were only forty-six hours in a week, and allowing for holidays and stoppages there remained only forty-two hours, and these spread over the forty-six years averaged only about twenty-eight hours per week. There were 168 hours in a week——

EARL WINTERTON rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question. Debate resumed—

Mr. Clynes.

*MR. LUPTON continuing his speech said that calculating 168 hours in a week, that allowed one hour out of every six in a man's life for work, and if the man was married and his wife did not earn any money the proportion would be one hour out of every twelve hours during life of the couple. [Cries of "Divide, divide."] He could not be a party to a measure which would make it a penal offence for a man and his wife to do more than one hour's work for wages in every twelve hours.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

SUPPLY [20TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1907–8.

REVENUE DEPARMENTS.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £260,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Post Office, including Telegraphs."

CLASS III.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Royal Irish Constabulary."

CLASS IV.

3. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £6,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Board of Education, including a Grant in Aid of the Imperial College of Science and Technology."

First Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he wished to take the opportunity of asking the Postmaster-General what decision he had come to in reference to the matter of political associations in the Post Office. The matter had already been raised in the House of Commons, and it would be raised until some very definite principle was laid down which all postal servants must follow. Only a few days ago the right hon. Gentleman circulated with the Votes and Proceedings an Answer to a Question in which he stated that there were no regulations with regard to the organisation of political bodies by servants of the Post Office.

*MR. SPEAKER: The point which the hon. Member is seeking to raise should be raised on the salary of the Postmaster-General. That is not contained in this Vote.

SIR F. BANBURY called attention to an item for the purchase of sites, and pointed out that while the original Estimate was £110,000 the revised estimate was £160,000, an increase of £50,000. The question of purchasing sites was not one which came up unexpectedly, and he wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman why there had been such a large increase in the Estimate. He observed also that there was a Supplementary Estimate for £59,800 in connection with the telegraph service. Last year the hon. Member for Preston moved a reduction of the Vote on the ground that the telegraph and telephone services were run at a loss, and not managed in a businesslike manner. It seemed to him that the hon. Member for Preston was right, for they had an increase of £59,000 which apparently had arisen from bad administration in working the telegraph and telephone services. And, therefore, he would be obliged if the right hon. Gentleman would give him some details as to the reason why this increase had come about. Further, under Sub-head C, there was an amount to meet expenditure in consequence of the changes recommended by the Select Committee on Post Office servants being carried out. He would like to have some little explanation of that. He wanted to know what effect the increases given had had on the Post Office servants. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that the expense under this head for last year came to £100,000, and he presumed that that was part of the Supplementary Estimate that was required. But the right hon. Gentleman had also said that the cost next year would be £500,000, and the year after, between £600,000 and £700,000, although he thought £700,000 would be nearer the mark than £600,000. He found in a newspaper called *The Post*, dated 22nd February, 1908, this remarkable statement—

> "The year opened with the not unnatural anticipation that the Hobhouse Committee would recommend substantial improvements in the Postal Service. Our past efforts had obtained the long-desired Parliamentary Inquiry which we had fondly hoped would act as an impartial tribunal between us and those in command. We were, however, doomed to failure; instead of an Arbitration Board, we discovered a tribunal bent on resisting the claims put forward on behalf of the staff, and although certain members of the Committee appear to have done their best for the staff, the Departmental views have been given undue preference, and evidence is not wanting that the methods adopted were not above suspicion."

And then this article goes on to state—

> "As soon as the recommendations of the Committee became known, it was thought advisable to call a special general meeting of members to give expression to the general disappointment and dissatisfaction."

And further, the article stated that the meeting—

> "Emphatically condemned the verdict of the Committee as being entirely against the weight of evidence, and obtained by methods that were considered very questionable."

He wanted to know what the right hon. Gentleman thought of his Department telling him that he had obtained results by methods which were considered very questionable—results which would impose this year £100,000 on the overburdened taxpayers of the country, and next year and the year following, between £500,000 and £700,000? He did not object to this if the verdict had been properly given, because he knew that his friend the hon. Member for Hoxton had taken a very prominent part in the business, and if it had gone to satisfy the desire of the Post Office servants. But he wanted to know if they were going to vote £100,000 when the Post Office servants were not satisfied? There were other questions he would have liked to have raised, but the hour being late he would only refer to another point in this paper, *The Post*. The writer went on to say—

> "The ambiguity of the language in the Report made it necessary to lay down the proper interpretation thereof, and the Postmaster-General invited representatives of the Association to discuss these interpretations with himself or the Secretariat. Here again further disappointment was experienced, for instead of discussing what the interpretation should be, the representatives had to listen to what the Departmental interpretation was, without the slightest prospect of altering it. We have no hesitation in saying that the whole business is entirely unsatisfactory from beginning to end, and the reason appears to be that the Government is bent on saving money in every possible way."

He did not agree with that part of the article. He did not believe that the Government were saving any money except in the case of the Army and Navy. He hoped the Postmaster-General would give a satisfactory account of what he had done himself and would give the House an assurance that this large sum which would be taken by the Post Office servants would satisfy their claims and that they would not ask for more.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT said that the House was indebted to the hon. Baronet for the consistent vigilance he displayed in looking after the expenditure of large sums of money which had been voted by the House. The hon. Baronet had pointed out that this Vote involved the expenditure of £100,000 on additions to the pay of Post Office servants and that that would further involve in a short time the expenditure of a still greater sum. Yet under these circumstances, his contention was that the Government had given no satisfaction whatever to their Post Office employees. The hon. Baronet had, by quotation from their newspaper, shown the views of the servants of the Post Office and why they were not satisfied with the conditions of their pay, but hon. Members who were ready to rush and vote without discrimination any amount of money were now inattentive. He wished that the vigilance of the hon. Baronet were more emulated by hon. Members on the Ministerial Benches. He could not help thinking that so large a sum of money as this might grow to a very much larger extent in time and ought not to be voted without some fuller and more careful explanation than had yet been given to them by the Postmaster-General. They ought to know whether these feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment among the employees of the Post Office, which had found such eloquent exposition in the magazine which had been referred to, and also been expressed by his hon. friend to some extent, would lead to very large amounts being demanded by these dissatisfied employees.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The hon. Baronet has asked me two specific questions, and I apologise for not being in my place earlier in the evening when he was speaking. The hon. Baronet asked me why we did not anticipate spending £70,000 upon the Birmingham Post Office site this year. The reason is that when we investigated the matter, we found that we were able to complete our negotiations rather sooner than we thought, and we were able to put ourselves two months in advance. That is the explanation of the Vote appearing this year, and not next. As to the telegraph service I can disabuse his mind of the idea that there is any increased ordinary expenditure. If he will look at the Supplementary Estimate he will see that these additions which will fall on the past year are in consequence of the recommendations of the Committee. Therefore any increase of expenditure on the telegraph service has nothing to do with the matter, and it has only reference to the recommendations of the Committee in some cases in regard to increased wages, and in other cases due to improved position. The hon. Baronet will be glad to know in reference to the point he raised as to the necessity of distinguishing between the telegraphic and telephonic services that I can assure him that we have already put our Estimates on the very basis he indicated. We have initiated a method of distinguishing between the telephone and telegraph services so that those interested will find an absolute distinction between the two. I will have a Return made as to the form of Estimate which will show that distinction. I shall be glad of any criticism on the Estimates both in the past and in the future, but in the future we shall have an absolute distinction between telephonic service and telegraphic service. The telegraphic system is a losing one, unfortunately, but the telephonic service is a paying one, and we want to keep it on a paying basis. In reply to the hon. Member I would say that I have already explained at considerable length the amounts which we were voting upon the Supplementary Estimates, and I need not go all over it again. It would be only a repetition of my speech. I explained what the Parliamentary Committee had recommended, and I explained the amount which had been spent. I cannot accept the views which have been read from a service organ and I deny the statements made there. I am quite certain that the Parliamentary Committee of this House did their very best in a very difficult position, and gave an impartial and unprejudiced judgment on the case. As far as I am concerned, I have fully accepted and endorsed the findings of that Committee and endeavoured to put them into force as far as possible, and I think we shall all agree in voting the amount which we have divided among a very zealous and very efficient branch of the public service.

Question put, and agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said that before the Vote passed he wished to ask some questions of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. They were informed that the Constabulary Force had been increased in the last six months by something like 800 members. They were also aware that the expense of each addition to the force was about £100 per annum. He would, therefore, ask how many extra constables were represented by the amount which they were now asked to vote. It appeared to him that the amount asked for to carry on up to 31st March was insufficient, and he would have expected the sum to be nearer £20,000 than £5,000. Would the Chief Secretary tell them what were the numbers of police in respect of which this Vote was asked for, and whether the sum was adequate? He, personally, had no objection to offer if it was. This, however, was the fourth Supplementary Estimate which they had been asked to vote within the last fortnight, and that was a very serious state of affairs. He would be slow to suggest that the sum asked for was not asked for in good faith, but on the information before them it appeared to him that it was hardly sufficient to cover the necessary expense.

MR. BIRRELL: I can assure the hon. Member that the Supplementary Estimate is perfectly accurate, and that it covers all the services detailed. This is a substantial advance, as we ask for an increase of £2,000. The original Estimate, as the Paper shows, was £18,500, and now the revised Estimate is £20,500. In 1906–07, the grant was £19,000, and the expenditure only £17,311. In 1905–06, the original Estimate was £18,000, and the expenditure only £17,867. In the year 1904–05, the original Estimate was £20,000, and the actual expenditure £16,724, so that there has been a considerable saving in the past, but now I am sorry to say that there is a considerable increase, the Estimate being £18,500, and the expenditure £20,500. It does not bear any definite ratio to the number of the force. It depends on the extent and nature of the duties involving the absence of these men from their stations, and the circumstances under which they were employed. The hon. Member will see that although it is quite true the number of the force has been obliged to be increased this has no ratio to that.

MR. BARRIE said he understood the Vote now under consideration was not the subsistence Vote.

MR. BIRRELL: The Vote is for an extra amount required in order to provide the subsistence money and travelling expenses. What I was pointing out was that this allowance does not depend on the number of men, but upon the number of times that a certain number of the men might be required to undertake extra duties away from their stations. Therefore, it is not enough for the hon. Gentleman to say that because the numbers of the force have been increased the subsistence amount should be larger.

SIR F. BANBURY said the right hon. Gentleman had made the situation absolutely clear. This Vote was not required in consequence of the increase in the force, but because when men were moved from their barracks they had to be paid their travelling expenses and subsistence money in the places to which they had been moved. That meant that there was great disorder in Ireland, which caused these men to be moved from place to place. To make the matter quite clear the right hon. Gentleman had informed the House that in previous years the subsistence allowance was much smaller than at present. It was much smaller because in other years the police having been appointed to a barrack remained there and did their duty there. There were no outrages at the houses of peers or anybody else, no firing into houses or outrages of that kind, and the police did not require to be moved. The right hon. Gentleman had made an admission that he could not get out of, and he had to come down and ask for this increase of £5,000 because of the disturbed condition of the country. The House was indebted to the hon. Member for Londonderry for having elicited this important statement. The only doubt in his mind was whether the House ought not to oppose this grant on the ground that it was not sufficient and if his hon. friend would tell with him he would be pleased to divide the House.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked whether the increase under this Vote was not 10 per cent. or more. The Chief Secretary in reply to his hon. friend the Member for Londonderry had not given any indication as to whether this Supplementary Estimate would not occur in future years if he and his colleagues remained responsible for the government of Ireland. When they saw an increase of 10 per cent. in a Vote surely they should have some statement from the Member in charge as to whether it would be recurrent. If what appeared in the Press was correct it looked as if this Vote in the future would be increased by 20 per cent. or 30 per cent., because it must be remembered that when men were removed from their ordinary abode they were subjected to great discomfort and living was made more difficult for them. Therefore it was only due to the House that the right hon. Gentleman should tell them whether this Vote would be increased in future.

MR. BIRRELL: I am not a prophet, but in this case I venture to prophesy that when I leave my office the Vote will increase.

MR. T. L. CORBETT expressed the hope that the hon. Baronet the Member for London would not divide the House on this Vote. At the same time it seemed to him a curious thing that while they were told Ireland was in a peaceful condition the House should be asked to sanction this very large additional Vote. Eight hundred and two more men had been enrolled, and he thought it was absolutely necessary that this amount should be voted. The right hon. Gentleman was now finding it necessary, at all events, largely and properly to increase the number of police. If he would only give the police the thought that they had behind them a Government prepared to support them and back them up in doing their duty, they would vote this money even more readily. The Government was constantly reiterating that Ireland was in a peaceful condition, and yet they asked them for a largely increased expenditure on police. He hoped his hon. friend would not insist upon dividing the House. He hoped he would accept the assurance of the Ulster Members that there was not a single member of the Force who was not absolutely required to maintain law and order in Ireland. Although the disturbances were hushed up by the Government, they knew the real need for these men, and to do them justice, they had engaged a large extra force.

Question put, and agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University): The Vote which accompanies this Supplementary Estimate is somewhat puzzling, the object for which the money is to be voted is a new one. I am glad to see that this Imperial College has at last taken a permanent position, and I am sure everyone who is interested in the technological education of the country will heartily wish it success. I should like, however, to have some explanation from the Parliamentary Secretary as to how this particular sum of £6,000 is arrived at. I have no doubt it can be given, but it is not supplied in the Vote added to the Supplementary Estimate. As I understand the matter, the Government are proposing to grant £20,000 a year to this Royal College of Science and Technology, and that £20,000 is to include the money hitherto paid to the Royal College of Science and School of Mines. One must, therefore, look to the Estimates of last year and the Estimates of this year to see what is appropriated to the Royal College of Science and School of Mines to ascertain how this £6,000 is arrived at. I have no doubt the Parliamentary Secretary will be able to explain this: In the Estimate for last year there was £15,762 for salaries and expenses; £4,225 for exhibitions and scholarships; £3,750 for the laboratory; £900 for heating; £1,800 for collections; and £150 for furniture, the whole amounting to £26,587. If the College of Science and the School of Mines required £26,587 last year, and if the Royal College of Science and Technology is to receive £20,000 a year from the Government, I do not understand how it is there is still £6,000 due to this institution. Why, having received £26,000, are you asking for more? Then there is an estimate this year for the Royal College of Science of £18,551, set down as a charge which will no longer be made. There are still in the Estimates for the year charges for studentships, heating, collections, and lighting. If these charges continue, what is this charge of £18,000 odd which is set aside as being no longer due to the Royal College of Science? If that is to be subtracted from the £20,000 which the Government pay to the Royal College, how is it that £6,000 is due still on this financial year? I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary these questions: why, having had so much during the present financial year, are you asking for £6,000 more? Supposing you get this £6,000, how do you explain the difference between £26,000 odd, the charge last year, and £18,000 odd which you say will not be charged this year? Lastly, why is this sum to be withdrawn from the cognizance of the Comptroller and Auditor-General? I do not understand the position. Here is money granted by Parliament for a definite purpose. Surely the Comptroller-General has first of all to consider whether the money is properly appropriated to that purpose, and next, whether it has been properly applied. What on earth is the reason why this particular sum has been withdrawn from the cognisance of the Comptroller-General on whom we rely for securing that the money vote is applied to the purpose for which we vote it? I have no doubt that there is an explanation of these complications which have bewildered my unmathematical mind, but I venture to think they would be found perplexing to anyone who pays attention to the grants made by the Government to science in its various departments. I do not grudge a single penny which the Government is prepared to spend on this Royal College. I believe the money will be well spent and that the institution is one from which good will result. It is in no grudging spirit that I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to explain how he gets at this £6,000.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. LOUGH, Islington, W.): The hon. Baronet is not unreasonable in asking for an explanation. I am sorry he does not find the note at the foot of the Estimate quite full enough to satisfy him, but I will be glad to give him what he wants. The arrangement is that a grant had to be paid to this new college of £20,000 a year, and I may here dispose of one difficulty that was raised at the end of the hon. Member's remarks. This £20,000 will appear in the Estimates of the Board of Education, so that it will not be withdrawn from the cognisance of the high authorities to whom he alluded, and there will still be an opportunity of raising any questions connected with it in Parliament. Now I come to this particular grant-in-aid for this year. The hon. Member quite rightly asked how the amount was made up. It is made up in this way. The Treasury directed that from the day, which was 8th July, 1907, when the Royal College was incorporated, a grant in proportion to the £20,000 a year should be allocated to the Royal College, and that sum came to something like £14,000. But on 8th July the Royal College was not in a position to take up the actual administration of those moneys, and so it asked the Board of Education to go on with the expenditure provided in the Estimates until 31st December. Therefore the grant of £14,000 which it should receive was reduced by £8,000, which was expended by the Board on behalf of the College, thus leaving this amount of £6,000 which is the present grant-in-aid. If the explanation is clear the hon. Member will see that one of his difficult Questions is rather easy to answer. He says: "Why, when this amount was provided in the Estimates last year do you want £6,000 extra?" We do not want £6,000 extra. The proportion of our Estimates for three months from 1st January to 31st March, this year will not be paid over. There will be an appropriation-in-aid of £5,000 set off against the grant-in-aid which we ask for now. That, I think, makes one difficulty that has occurred to the mind of my hon. friend disappear. The hon. Gentleman then asked why some part of the Estimate which appeared before for the Royal College of Science and the School of Mines will still appear on the Estimates next year. There are certain expenses which we cannot escape, although there will be a reduction of £18,000 or £19,000 approximately. For instance, we have not only to pay £20,000 to the new College, but also fees for students, which will come to a few thousands a year more. All this was part of the bargain, for which I think the hon. Member himself was responsible with the Royal College of Science, and that explains why there will be a certain amount of money in our Estimates still for this purpose on the one hand, and why we ask for £6,000 for this year on the other hand, and why it is not quite an additional expenditure, because there will be an appropriation-in-aid against it. I hope I have answered now the various questions that the hon. Member has put, and that the House will let the Resolution be taken.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said he hoped the House had found a clear understanding of the position from the words of the hon. Member, but he was afraid that with considerable experience of the Estimates he could not say that that was the case in his own mind. He had known Estimates for a good while, but he was bound to say that he had never seen a more obscure note than that appended to this Estimate. He was accustomed, perhaps, in other days not always to give quite as clear an explanation of the Votes of the Estimates he had prepared as he ought to have done, but anything more obscure than this he had never seen. The note said—

> "The Imperial College of Science and Technology was incorporated by Charter of 8th July, 1907, but the administration of the Royal College of Science and School of Mines was left to the Board of Education until 31st December, 1907."

That meant, put in plain language, that from 8th July a new body was established to carry on the Imperial College, but that the two other colleges which were to be absorbed in the larger Imperial College were to be carried on by the Board of Education to the end of last year, after which the new body was to assume financial responsibility. As against this expenditure by the Board of Education there was to be set off a proportion of the grant-in-aid which was fixed, he understood at the time the charter was drawn up—a grant-in-aid of £20,000. But no part of that grant-in-aid was ever voted till they were now asked to vote a portion of it to the amount of £6,000. They had no right to spend that £20,000 out of the Vote obtained last session. How much did they defray? They deducted from the Estimates for this year £18,550 which was hereafter to be saved and to be replaced by the £20,000 which was in future to be given. But they asked for £6,000 to defray the expenses of three months, from 1st January to 31st March, 1908. If three months required £6,000, how were they to carry on a much bigger, and a growing institution for twelve months for £20,000, which was all that was to be given. According to his best arithmetic the grant ought to be, not £20,000, but four times £6,000—£24,000. That was a very simple rule of arithmetic. Surely the hon. Gentleman would explain why it was necessary to ask for £6,000 for the last three months of the financial year when they were going to give to the new governors who would now be responsible for carrying on the work, only £20,000 for twelve months. That was a question which surely the hon. Member would answer. Next, with regard to the question of control. The hon. Gentleman very airily passed it over by saying the money would be in the Vote for the Board of Education, and, therefore, would not be withdrawn from the knowledge of the House. They all knew that, but the House had decided by Act of Parliament that it could not properly carry out the functions of control without the help of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. The mere fact of an item appearing in the Vote so that it might be talked of at twelve or one o'clock in the morning was so inadequate a check upon the expenditure of money that they had established an officer—the Comptroller and Auditor-General—to make that examination. But they were expressly told that this special Vote would not be accounted for in detail to the Comptroller and Auditor-General. He could quite understand why they should prevent this money, which would go to so good a purpose as the Technical College being surrendered at the close of the financial year—why they should allow them to carry on any sum which they might save to the next year. That was quite legitimate, but it by no means followed that they ought to withdraw this sum, which they were paying to a body which would not be represented in that House, from the investigation and control of the officer appointed for the purpose. They were asked on a former occasion to vote £100,000 for the purposes of the Small Holding Act, but although it was expressly laid down that the money saved from one year should not be surrendered at the end of the year, it was also stipulated that the expenditure of £100,000 should be subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

MR. LOUGH: But that is not a parallel case.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK: But it ought to be. The note at the top of the page told them that the Vote would be accounted for by the Board of Education, whilst the note at the foot of the page said it would not be accounted for by the Comptroller and Auditor-General. They were practically repealing the Act of Parliament by having an arbitrary note of that kind which was directly opposed to the provisions of the Statute appointing the Comptroller and Auditor-General, whose services they were dispensing with by this note. He did not understand how £6,000 represented one quarter of the £20,000 they were about to devote to the Technical College, and the explanation given by the hon. Member did not in any way justify the suspension of the ordinary rule provided by the Statute he had referred to.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) said the explanation which had been given by the hon. Member was anything but satisfactory. The first impression given to the House was that this was an extra sum acquired for some particular purpose, but his hon. friend the Member for the Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities had shown that it was simply an unexpended balance. Where was that money going to? Was it going to be spent in some other way than that for which it was originally voted? They had been told that the £20,000 would come under the Education Vote, but he hoped the hon. Member would make that point more clear, and reply to the questions which had been put to him by his hon. friend. Why was £6,000 required to maintain this college for three months and £20,000 for twelve months? This seemed to him to be a very slovenly state of finance and one in regard to which they had a perfect right to demand some further explanation.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he had listened carefully to the questions which had been put by his hon. friends, and what had been said by the hon. Member representing the Government was in no sense a reply to the arguments which had been put forward. The hon. Member for the Aberdeen and Glasgow Universities had clearly shown that this Vote was open to some very grave objection. First of all there was the question of the audit. It was a very serious matter to ask the House of Commons to vote a sum of money in regard to the expenditure of which it would afterwards retain no control whatever. To vote money without any subsequent control over its expenditure was contrary to the practice and the traditions of the House. He well remembered, in years gone by, the hon.

Member now representing the Government was very active indeed in criticising Estimates, and insisting upon a careful audit of all public expenditure. It was not a mere matter of £6,000 which was involved but a matter of principle, for they had to decide whether they were to give a Government Department power to get hold of money in order to tuck it away out of public sight, the House of Commons having no control over it thereafter. They knew how perfunctory the control of Parliament was becoming in regard to Estimates generally. The hon. Member had stated that this item would appear on the Estimates year by year, but what check would that give to the House over its expenditure? When the hon. Member for the Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities was putting forward his case the hon. Member representing the Board of Education did not even trouble to listen to him, for he was busy talking to another hon. Member at the time. That was the measure of Parliamentary control which Ministers were obliged to give to the House of Commons. What was being done was a scandal. If the public knew the way the Estimates were forced through Parliament by the support of a docile majority, they would make short shrift with the Ministry.

*MR. CARLILE said he wished to enter a protest against the indifferent manner in which Questions addressed to the Government by hon. Members on that side of the House had been received by the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote. This was the second time within the last few days he had felt it his duty to draw attention to the absence of the Minister for Education when the Education Vote had been under discussion. He defied anyone to understand the note to which reference had been made. Hon. Members on that side of the House recognised the value of technological instruction, and they hoped the time might come when it would be really adequately supported. There never was a time when it was more necessary than at present that our colleges and schools should be properly equipped for the giving of technological instruction. It was little less than a slight upon the House that the Minister for Education should fail to attend in order that hon. Members might have an opportunity of discussing with him the various questions on which they required enlightment. He moved to reduce the Vote by £100.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote had said £6,000 had been withdrawn from the supervision of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. Why had that been done?

MR. LOUGH was understood to say that the grant-in-aid itself had not been withdrawn from the supervision of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, but the details which hon. Members were pressing for.

SIR F. BANBURY protested against the President of the Board of Education not being in his place when this Vote was being discussed. What was the use of the Comptroller and Auditor-General unless he saw the details? In order that an audit might be effective it was necessary that the Auditor should know how money was spent. If the Comptroller and Auditor-General did not get the details showing how the £6,000 had been spent, the control of the House of Commons over finance was more of a shadow than it had ever been before. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education was a great purist in finance when in Opposition, and he would have protested against the slightest deviation from rule. Now he was the poacher become gamekeeper.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) did not see how the House could be expected to agree to this Vote when the Minister in charge refused to give any reason why the £6,000 was withdrawn from the control of the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said he did not join in the protest made by hon. Members against the absence of the Minister for Education. He thought the right hon. Gentleman's able representative would be able to deal with any question which arose in relation to the Vote. They were entitled to ask a few particulars. This sum was supposed to represent a proportion from 8th July, 1907, till 31st March, 1908, of the sum of £20,000. A very elementary knowledge of arithmetic would at once show that the proportion was—

MR. LOUGH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 161; Noes, 23. (Division List, No. 47.)

AYES.

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Bennett, E. N.
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Davies, David (Montgomery Co
Davies Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Gulland, John W.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helms, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kelley, George D.
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, Robert
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)

Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thompson, J. W. H (Somerset, E
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clive, Percy Archer
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craik, Sir Henry
Forster, Henry William
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hunt, Rowland
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Morpeth, Viscount
Rutherford, H. W. (Liverpool)
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Winterton, Earl

Tellers for the Noes—Viscount Valentia and Lord Edmund Talbot.

Question put accordingly, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

The House divided:—Ayes, 161; Noes, 22. (Division List, No. 48.)

AYES.

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Bennett, E. N.
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Matser of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Gulland, John W.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kelley, George D.
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G

Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thompson, J. W. H (Somerset, E
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clive, Percy Archer
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craik, Sir Henry
Forster, Henry William
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hunt, Rowland
Lane-Fox, G. R
Morpeth, Viscount
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Winterton, Earl

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Watson Rutherford.

SUPPLY [10th March] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £7,129,700, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expenses of Wages, etc., to Officers, Seamen and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,306,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants-in-Aid, and other Charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."

First Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed this day.

Second Resolution to be considered to-morrow.

WAYS AND MEANS [17th March] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:

1. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1908, the sum of £375,817, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909, the sum of £44,355,400 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

First Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Runciman.

Second Resolution to be considered this day.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes before One o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 19*th March*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council District Gas Bill [H.L.].—Petition for additional provision of the Wath Urban District Council under their Common Seal, together with the proposed clauses and Amendments annexed thereto; read, and referred to the Examiners.

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Saye and Sele and the Lord Wenlock be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee in the place of the Viscount Iveagh and the Lord Clinton, and that the Lord Wenlock be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—Leave given to the Select Committee to adjourn over To-morrow and not to sit on Monday next until half-past Two o'clock.

PETITION.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition against; of the Lord Provost, etc., of the City of Edinburgh; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Return showing the expenditure from the grant for public education in Scotland in the year 1907, with statistics.

LOAN FUND BOARD OF IRELAND.

Seventieth Annual Report, 1907.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.]

A message ordered to be sent to the Commons to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A. on Tuesday next at Three o'clock.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

***THE DUKE OF BEDFORD**: My Lords, the list of Questions I have on the Paper is a long one, but they will not necessitate any lengthy explanation on my part. I desire to ask the noble Earl the Under-Secretary of State for War: (1.) Whether in the case of recruits, enlisting directly into the Special Reserve and of men re-engaging from the Militia, Paragraph 15 of Attestation Paper, Army Reserve Special Reservists may be so amended as to read, "Are you willing to be attested to serve in the 3rd Reserve Battalion . . . Regiment, and to be transferred to any infantry battalion of the Line, when the reserves are called out." I believe that is exactly the form of service which His Majesty's Government require from the Special Infantry Reservists, and it is a form which the men themselves will very easily understand. I attach importance to the words "any infantry battalion of the Line," so as to limit the man's liability to service in the infantry and in the infantry only.

I next ask: (2.) Whether, in view of the statement made by the Under-Secretary of State for War on 20th February last, in reference to the 3rd Special Reserve battalion, that "during the non-training period the battalion did not exist as such," the Special Reserve battalions which do not exist as such during the non-training period are identical with the battalions referred to in Paragraph 23 of the Army Order of 23rd December, which states "that the establishment of the regular officers and non-commissioned officers in the 3rd Reserve battalions is fixed on a scale which will allow of their being used as training centres for the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Territorial Force. Thus they will become in the fullest sense training battalions."

My third Question raises the responsibility of the officers commanding Special Reserve battalions in the non-training period. I desire to ask: (3.) Will the lieutenant-colonel commanding a Special Reserve battalion be held in any way responsible for any matters connected with his battalion during the non-training period, and will he conduct, and, if not, who will conduct all correspondnce relating to the Special Reserve battalions during the non-training period. This is very similar to the question that has already been raised as to the powers of Militia commanding officers in the non-training period, but I hope the noble Earl will not give me the answer that the commanding officer of a Special Reserve battalion will be in very much the same position as the Militia commanding officer in the past. That means responsibility, but absolutely no control at all, and that is not by any means a satisfactory form of administration.

Next I ask: (4.) Will the lieutenant-colonel of a Special Reserve battalion be held responsible for the efficiency of the battalion in view of the facts that he has no control over the recruit training of his men, that he will not be consulted as to the appointment or removal of the Line major, officers, adjutant, and permanent staff, and that he is only in command of the battalion for twenty-one days of the year, and the Line major for the remaining 344? Also: (5) Will the Line major, who has been commanding officer during the non-training period, attend the annual training of a reserve battalion as senior major.

It is not certain, under the Army Order of 23rd December, the exact amount of bounty which will be paid to the Special Reserve recruit to join the Line. I therefore ask: (6) What is the amount of the bounty which will be paid to the Special Reserve recruit to join the Line during or at the end of the six months preliminary training. Next I desire to know: (7) Is it the case that when a proclamation calling out the Reserve has been issued, and the Special Reservists have thereby become soldiers of the Regular Army, these men will be prohibited from joining any named regiment of the Line owing to being required for general drafting purposes. That would seem to place the Special Reservist in a worse position than the " man in the street," or the man who had already joined the regiment which he prefers in the Regular Army.

My next three Questions are: (8) Will the men of the disbanded Militia battalions, who are prohibited from training as Militiamen this year by the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, be allowed to draw the non-training bounty up to February, 1909, which by the Army Order of 5th February, 1908, allows men of the Militia battalions training this year to draw, provided that they attend the training of Militia battalions this year? (9) The number of infantry officers attached to Line depots is at present, approximately, 425. The number of Regular officers to be posted to the 3rd Special Reserve Battalions, including the 425 now attached to the depots is, approximately, 740. Is it the intention to add about 315 officers, representing the difference between the number of officers now attached to the depots and the total number of Line officers required for the 3rd Special Reserve Battalions to the establishment of Line officers before the end of this summer? (10) In reference to the statement of the Under-Secretary of State for War that seventeen will be the minimum age of enlistment for recruits into the Special Reserve, what means will be taken to ensure that boys of less than seventeen years of age are not accepted? The noble Earl stated that seventeen would be the minimum age of enlistment in the Special Reserve. Though seventeen is the minimum age for the Militia and eighteen for the Line, a very large percentage of boys are taken below that age; and I should be glad to know what special means are going to be taken to prevent that with regard to the Special Reserve.

Finally, I desire to ask: (11) If married men will be prohibited from enlisting directly into the Special Reserve engineers, artillery, and infantry, and if after direct enlistment a man proves to be a married man, will he be discharged from the Special Reserve? The point of that is this, that the Special Reservist is trained for six months, and if you take a married man away from his wife and children for six months training in barracks, he cannot support his family during the period. Moreover, a married man would not, I presume, be encouraged to enlist in the Regular Army.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of PORTSMOUTH): My Lords, I think it will be for the convenience of my noble friend, if I answer his Questions *seriatim.* In reply to the first Question, I am afraid that the Army Council cannot agree to the amendment of the attestation paper suggested by my noble friend. The recruit is not attested for a particular battalion, but for a corps, and this is clearly explained in Paragraph 6 of the Notice Paper. In ordinary circumstances it is most improbable that a Special Reservist would be drafted outside his Territorial Regular battalions. To introduce an amendment worded in the manner suggested by my noble friend would indicate that his transfer to any infantry battalion of the Line would be a thing of ordinary occurrence. This is not the intention of the Army Council, and, as I have already indicated, it would only be in very exceptional circumstances that the drafting of Special Reservists outside the Territorial Regular battalions would be resorted to.

In reply to my noble friend's second Question, my answer is that they are identical. When I stated on 20th February that during the non-training period a battalion does not exist as such I made that statement with special reference to a specific Question which had been put to me by Lord Hardinge regarding the command of the battalion during this period. The Special Reserve battalions during the non-training period will exist just as the battalions of the existing Militia may be said to exist during the non-training period.

The noble Duke rather anticipated my reply to his third and fourth Questions. The position of the lieutenant-colonel commanding a Special Reserve battalion will be practically that of an officer commanding a Militia battalion. He will be allowed to visit recruits at the depot during the non-training period. Regulations on this matter are in process of preparation, and if it is possible for us to devise any means by which we can increase the sense of responsibility, we shall be only too glad to consider the matter; and we should welcome any suggestions privately communicated on the subject.

In regard to the fifth Question I may remind my noble friend of the Committee which has been appointed, under the chairmanship of Sir William Nicholson, to consider the difficult question of the relative rank of Line and Militia officers in the same battalion. On the decision eventually arrived at will depend whether the Line major will, as under existing Regulations, rank as the senior major, or whether he will take rank in accordance with the date of his appointment as major—that is to say, senior or junior to the majors of the Special Reserve according as their appointments date after or before his. In reply to my noble friend's sixth Question, a Special Reserve recruit who has completed three months drill and then goes to the Line is permitted to draw the full bounty of 30s. which he would have received on completing his six months recruits' drill. This is clearly laid down in Paragraph 8 of Appendix 10, Army Order, of 23rd December last.

I now come to the noble Duke's seventh Question. I presume that what my noble friend wishes to ask is whether the proclamation calling out the Reserve practically makes the Special Reservists part of the Regular Army, and, therefore, whether it will be open to these men to join a Line regiment just as they would in peace time. If this is what my noble friend means, I have to inform him that the Special Reservists will not be allowed to join—that is to say, formally to enlist into—any of the Line regiments. When the Reserve is called out the Special Reservists automatically become part of the Reserve of the Regular Army. If my noble friend means to ask whether these Special Reservists are to have any choice as regards the regiment to which they will be sent, my answer is that, while reserving the right to draft them to any regiment, we shall in all cases endeavour to send them to their Regular Territorial battalions.

In reply to my noble friend's eighth Question, I may remind him of the answer I gave him on this matter on 20th February. The special Army Order of 5th February specifically lays down that those Militiamen who belong to disbanded battalions, even if they do not elect to join any of the Special Reserve battalions, will in all cases receive the non-training bounty up to February, 1909. The training bounty is the only bounty which they will not receive, and they will not receive that because they will not be called up for training.

I would first like to point out, in reply to my noble friend's ninth Question. that the figures given by my noble friend are not quite accurate. The increase in Regular officers, exclusive of adjutants and quartermasters, which the establishments of the new Special Reserve battalions render necessary, is estimated at 261. Against this increase there must be set an estimated decrease of adjutants and quartermasters, which reduces the net increase to 220. It is not intended to add all these officers to the Special Reserve battalions this summer. The additions must be made gradually, but I understand that one captain will be added to the strength of each battalion this year. As to the tenth Question the minimum age of enlistment of seventeen years is already provided for in Regulations. This age is precisely the same as in the case of the Militia, and the ordinary means that have been hitherto taken to prevent boys of less than seventeen joining the Militia will also be taken in the case of the Special Reserve. I would refer my noble friend to Paragraph 102 (*c*) of the Recruiting Regulations. In reply to my noble friend's eleventh Question, I may say that there is nothing in the Regulations to prohibit a married man enlisting into the Special Reserve, whether engineers, artillery, or infantry. There is, therefore, no reason to discharge a man if after enlistment he proves to be a married man.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: But what does the noble Earl propose to do with the man's starving wife and family?

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: We hope we shall not have cases of that kind.

LORD ABINGER: I desire to say a word with regard to the answer to the noble Duke's third Question. In the case of Special Reserve battalions a Line major is to be brought in, and out of the training period this officer will, we understand, be responsible for the command. I do not think the noble Earl's answer made it quite clear as to who would be responsible during the training period—the lieutenant-colonel commanding the Special Reserve battalion or the Line officer brought in.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I thought I made it clear that the officer commanding would be responsible. His position will be practically that of an officer commanding a Militia battalion.

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE rose to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War: (1) Whether the Army Council propose to extend the privilege of separation allowance to private soldiers; (2) Whether he will consider the advisability of increasing the allowance (per week) to Volunteers to 10s., which is the sum which most corps now pay; (3) Whether he will reconsider the imposition of the very heavy fines which it is now proposed to levy for non-attendance at camp; (4) Whether he will endeavour to make the attestation paper generally more attractive than it is in its present form, having regard to the threat of imprisonment for false answers which it at present contains; (5) How he proposes to deal with members of the present Auxiliary Forces who from force of circumstances may in the future be precluded from joining amalgamated units; (6) How members of the permanent staff of a unit are to be dealt with when they cannot be absorbed on the disbandment of their unit.

The noble Earl said: My Lords, before asking the Questions which stand in my name I should like to draw attention to a matter of which I have given the noble Earl private notice. It relates to a grievance—and, I think the noble Earl will admit, an injustice—which has been overlooked in the framing of the rules for the County Associations. I have in my mind the case of a retired officer, enjoying a pension, who has been selected as secretary to a Territorial Association. As your Lordships are aware, the salary in most cases is very small at the best. Before the Secretary of State for War altered the conditions I heard of one county which was only able to pay a salary of £60 to the officer who was going to serve them as secretary, no doubt to the best of his ability. Since then I believe matters have been materially improved. The case to which I wish to call attention is that of a captain who has been appointed secretary of a Territorial Association at a salary of £200 a year, and who, we learned last week for the first time, will be required to resign his pension of £100 a year before he can accept the £200 a year from the association. I submit, my Lords, that this is not only a soldier's grievance, but a real injustice.

My Questions are framed with the sole desire to carry out loyally the conditions imposed by His Majesty's Government. As regards the Volunteers, some noble Lords may know that I am interested in them and have been for many years. I have commanded them in peace and war, and know something about them. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will not think that I am unduly taking up your time. My first Question is whether the Army Council propose to extend the privilege of separation allowance to private soldiers. I anticipate that the answer to that will be, in the first place, that the training is so short that it is not worth while going into that matter; but, as non-commissioned officers will have separation allowance and draw Army pay during their training, surely the private soldier should be considered. Take the case of an artisan. He will have to leave his wife and family, and, in addition, make arrangements with his employer; and we who have had to do with Volunteers, know that the question of how long his employer will allow him to be away for the purpose of camp is a very difficult one. I do not think it is much to ask, especially as the time of training is so short, that the privilege of separation allowance should be extended to the private soldier.

Next, I ask the noble Earl whether he will consider the advisability of increasing the allowance per week to Volunteers to 10s. In most county corps it is the custom to give an allowance of 10s. a week during training; I think the Army Council proposed that it should be 8s. I hope the War Office will consider the advisabilty of increasing that allowance by 2s. That does not apply to London regiments, who now take the whole of the capitation grant and do not generally make an allowance to privates during camp. I then desire to ask the noble Earl whether he will reconsider the imposition of the very heavy fines which it is now proposed to levy for non-attendance at camp, and whether he will endeavour to make the attestation paper generally more attractive than it is in its present form, having regard to the threat of imprisonment for false answers which it at present contains. I should expect the noble Earl to say that the form was framed for bad characters, and for people who intentionally did wrong; but I do not like to see the British Volunteer, who has served the country so well in the past, placed in the position of being threatened with the Army Council's vengeance before even he is attested. I have in my hand Form E. 502, which, being interpreted, is the attestation paper.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: Is that the old one?

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE: No, the new one; I believe it is only a few hours old. I see, at the end of the paper, in italics—the italics are so small that I can hardly read the passage — these words—

> "Under the provisions of Section 99 of the Army Act, if a person knowingly makes a false answer to any question contained in the attestation paper he renders himself liable to punishment."

Many men who intend to join will no doubt read that, but very few, I venture to think, will refer to Section 99 of the Army Act. If they did I think a great many of them would cry off and not wish to join the Territorial Force. Section 99 (1) of the Army Act runs as follows:—

> "If a person knowingly makes a false answer to any question contained in the attestation paper which has been put to him by or by direction of the justice before whom he appears for the purpose of being attested, he shall be

liable on summary conviction to be imprisoned with or without hard labour for any period not exceeding three months."

I venture to submit that it is going too far, when you invite a man as a Volunteer to serve you, to hold this threat over his head. We know that it is very difficult in some cases for a man who is not very literate, shall I say, to give absolutely correct answers to all the questions. Some men might unknowingly contravene——

LORD LUCAS: The section says "knowingly."

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE: But some men might unknowingly——

LORD LUCAS: In that case they would not be liable for punishment.

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE: I would next ask the noble Earl how he proposes to deal with members of the present Auxiliary Forces who from force of circumstances may in the future be precluded from joining amalgamated units. I have a case in point in my own county, Norfolk. Along the border of Norfolk and Suffolk there are seven big towns which are centres for Volunteer Infantry recruiting, and by the recruiting area now drawn up to meet the new requirements by which we shall recruit artillery in a certain area, and infantry in another, some five companies of the 2nd battalion of the Norfolk regiment will be disbanded and will have long distances to go, and heavy travelling expenses to incur, before they can get anywhere near a unit to which they can be attached and with whom they can drill. I desire also to ask how Members of the permanent staff of a unit are to be dealt with when they cannot be absorbed on the disbandment of their unit. If there are two battalions and one is disbanded, it stands to reason that there will be a large number of permanent staff who will have no employment. I ask the noble Earl how he proposes to deal with these men in the future. I did hear that they were going to be allowed to wear their uniform, but what good that will do them, or when they will wear it, I do not know. Perhaps the noble Earl will allow me to ask a further question, of which I have not given him notice, concerning the much-valued Volunteer decoration. Those officers who would be entitled to it soon after the ever-to-be-remembered 1st April may just miss getting it; and we should like to know whether they will be eligible. In this connection I do not see my late colonel, the noble and gallant Field-Marshal, in his place, but I should have liked to congratulate him on getting the Volunteer decoration by the skin of his teeth.

THE EARL OF ERROLL: My Lords, before the noble Earl the Under-Secretary replies, I should like to draw attention for a moment to the first Question put to him by the noble Earl with reference to separation allowance. I hope that His Majesty's Government will see their way to alter their decision as to the separation allowance being given only to non-commissioned officers. I am told that there are about 20 per cent. of married men in the Volunteers, and that the colonels look upon them as some of the best men they have got. I was also informed yesterday by an officer commanding a brigade in the Midlands that by not giving the separation allowance to the privates the Territorial Army would be liable to lose some 20,000 men. He further said that a great many of the men could afford to lose one week's wages, but not two. It is of the greatest importance that as many men as possible should be got to train for two weeks, and I suggest, as a compromise, that separation allowance should at least be given to the men who come out for a fortnight's training. In this way you would greatly mitigate the hardship and ensure having a very much larger number of better trained men.

LORD WENLOCK: My Lords, I should like to say, on this point, that my Association has sent up a strongly-worded Resolution urging upon the Secretary of State the importance of giving the separation allowance to privates. The information I obtained from officers commanding Volunteers in my county goes to show that, if privates are deprived of the separation allowance, the regiments are likely to lose a very large number of their most valuable men. I do not think any point has more impressed the Volunteers than the fact that privates are not to receive the separation allowance, whilst this privilege is to be given to non-commissioned officers. The non-commissioned officers are generally the foremen in the works in which the men are employed, and earn higher wages. I hope, therefore, the question will be reconsidered. The men will be expected to come out for a fortnight's training instead of for seven days, as now, and I believe that if this concession is withheld we shall in our part of the country lose a very large number of the men we are particularly anxious to retain.

LORD SAYE AND SELE: My Lords, I did not intend to take part in this discussion, but one of the points alluded to by Lord Albemarle particularly interests me. I refer to the uncertainty of the officers' position in regard to pensions. If we could get a definition of what an officer's pension is, I am sure it would be of great use; for in my humble opinion the dearth of officers is very closely bound up with this point. If you ask any officer in the British Army to define a pension you will only get one answer—namely, that it is a reward for past services, and I think your Lordships would return the same reply. Yet when it comes to an officer taking a position as secretary to a Territorial Association, or an appointment of that kind, his pension is invariably dragged in by the War Office, and it is said that he is getting so much pension, and therefore can do with less reward for his present services. I will give a concrete instance. At the commencement of the South African War there were two classes of officers—one receiving a pension and the other a gratuity. The pension was held on the security of promises; the gratuity, of course, was in the officer's pocket. When an officer was called back from the Reserve the Regulations took away his pension and put him on full pay. Therefore the pensioned officers, of whom I had the honour to be one, had their pension taken away; whereas the gratuity officers retained their gratuity intact. That was generally spoken of throughout the Army as a gross injustice, and I only quote it as one instance of the uncertainty that prevails. An officer never knows what exactly is his position, and this, I am sure, has a great bearing on the difficulty of getting officers and keeping them. I therefore ask whether some sort of definition of a pension could not be given which should hold good for all time.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I rise only for the purpose of expressing my thanks to my noble friend behind me for having called attention to a matter which seems to me of considerable importance—I mean the remuneration offered to the secretaries of these County Associations. I am constrained to say that in my view the War Office is making a great mistake in pushing its frugal principles too far, when it comes to deal with the emoluments of officers selected for this extremely important work. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the success or failure of an Association will very often depend upon the manner in which it is served by its secretary. The presidents and chairmen of the Associations are as often as not men who have many other public duties to perform, and who must depend to a great extent, if not entirely, for all matters of routine upon their secretaries. The secretary will have to start this brand new machinery, sometimes in circumstances of very great difficulty, and surely it is worth while offering to those whom you desire to attract to these positions, salaries bearing at any rate some relation to the importance of the work which they have to do. I am personally aware of a case in which a County Association was able to secure the assistance of a gallant officer as to whose qualifications there could be no doubt, because his name was included on the War Office list of officers eligible for these secretaryships. He was ready to take the post at a salary of £200 a year, not surely a very exaggerated stipend. We received from the War Office, however, an intimation that £100 a year was all that could be allowed, and that if more was to be given it must be provided from other sources. Obviously those other sources could only be either the generosity of private individuals or the deflection of a part of the allowance made to the Association from some other useful purpose to supplement the salary given to the secretary. To my mind both those alternatives would have been very regrettable. My noble friend who introduced the subject told the House that he believed matters had materially improved in this respect. I hope they have, because there is room for improvement. I do very earnestly entreat the War Office not to jeopardise the success of this most important scheme by an exaggerated parsimony in respect to this one particular.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: My Lords, a Liberal Government always finds itself in an unusually unhappy position in regard to the War Office administration. The Secretary of State is accused in the other House of spending too much money, and I am continually asked in your Lordship's House to spend a little more. I can assure the noble Marquess who has just spoken that I agree with him that the question of the remuneration of secretaries is an important and anxious one, and I entirely concur in the statement that the success of these Associations must, to a considerable extent, depend upon the ability and capacity of the secretary. I do not know whether the last word has been said on the subject, but I will bear in mind what the noble Marquess has said. Then the noble Lord behind me asked whether I would define what a pension is. I am almost nightly asked a series of conundrums by noble Lords opposite, and I do my best to reply, but the noble Lord must excuse me if I decline to attempt a definition on so difficult and debatable a point. As to the Question put to me by Lord Albemarle, I can assure the noble Earl that I will use all my influence to prevent an injustice being done to any gallant officer, and perhaps he will communicate to me privately the full facts of the case to which he referred. With regard to the Questions on the Paper, I listened with some concern to what was said by Lord Errol and Lord Wenlock, and I will see that the views they have put forward are brought before the proper quarter.

In reply to the first Question that Lord Albemarle placed on the Paper, I have to say I am afraid there is no possibility of extending the privilege of separation allowance to private soldiers of the Territorial Force. The reasons for this decision of the Army Council I have already given in detail in reply to my noble friend Lord Ampthill, on the 13th of last month. In reply to my noble friend's second Question, there will be no allowance, as such, given to the men of the Territorial Force. The men will get the pay of their rank on the same lines as the Regulars. I may add that I am informed that my noble friend is scarcely accurate in saying that most corps now pay 10s. weekly allowance to their men.

Then I come to the third Question, and on that matter I do not think my noble friend need feel any great apprehension. It is not the intention of the Army Council that the maximum fine laid down under the Act for non-attendance at camp should be imposed when there is reasonable excuse for such non-attendance. The widest possible discretion is left to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief to deal with individual cases on their merits as they arise, and to decide whether any action should be taken under Clause 21 of the Act. In reply to my noble friend's fourth Question, a new form of the attestation paper has recently been issued, from which several details which had been criticised as objectionable have been altogether omitted. The intimation that the giving of false answers renders the man liable to punishment is still retained. We consider it only fair that the man should be informed of his liability in this respect under Section 99 of the Army Act, and in the revised form of the attestation paper this fact is represented to the man in as moderate terms as possible.

I may inform my noble friend in reply to his fifth Question, that an Army Order will be issued, I hope during this week, dealing with the whole question of the amalgamation of units. This Army Order will give detailed instructions as to how the members of the present Auxiliary Forces, to whom he refers, are to be dealt with. In reply to my noble friend's sixth Question, I have to inform him that this question of the permanent staff of units is being considered, and detailed instructions regarding the various cases that arise will be issued. There was one other point to which the noble Earl referred, namely, the Volunteer decoration. I had a Question put to me a little while ago on this point, and I then said, and now repeat, that the matter is in a forward condition; but, of course, it would not be proper for me to make any statement regarding it before we have received the Royal approval.

LORD HARRIS: I understood the noble Earl to say that it was not the intention of the Army Council to impose very heavy fines in the case of men failing to attend camp.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: Whenever there is reasonable excuse.

LORD HARRIS: That is not the point. On making inquiries at the War Office, I understood that in all cases in which a man failed to earn all that he could earn, it would be necessary for the County Association to prosecute him in the Courts, when it would be for the justices to decide what fine should be imposed. Under the old system there was a code of rules which the man accepted as conditions of service, and attached to them was a schedule of fines, and if a man failed to earn any part of the contingent grant the commanding officer was able to recover such an amount as he failed to earn. Now the noble Earl says the War Office is going to impose the fine. My impression is that he is wrong there. Under the Act and the attestation form combined the liability of the Yeoman or the Volunteer, as the case may be, is laid down, and, if he fails fully to perform his liability, it is for the Association to decide whether they will endeavour to recover what he ought to have earned by going to the Courts. It will not lie with the commanding officer, the County Association, or the Army Council, to decide what fine he should pay; that will be for the Court to decide.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I do not think there is anything incorrect in what my noble friend says, but it does not, I think, militate against the answer I have given.

LORD NEWTON: I should like to ask, to satisfy my curiosity, whether there is any guarantee that anybody will be fined at all.

[No Answer was returned.]

LORD NEWTON: Am I to have no answer.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I am afraid I cannot give a guarantee.

LORD NEWTON: Then I will put a Question on the Paper.

THE TERRITORIAL BATTERIES.

LORD WENLOCK: My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend, Lord Fortescue, I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War whether, when the guns are issued to the Territorial Army, there will be issued with them a proper complement of the range finders, signalling apparatus, and other equipment necessary for the training and efficiency of the batteries; and, if not, will he inform County Associations how much of this necessary equipment they will have to provide for themselves.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: As regards this matter, I have to inform my noble friend that all the necessary technical equipment will be provided by the War Office as soon as it is available.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 19*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—As amended considered; an Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time.

Dublin Corporation Bill (by Order).—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—"For making railways in the county of Down to be called the Ards and Bangor Railways; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

London United Tramways Bill.—"For conferring further powers on the London United Tramways, Limited; for constructing tramways, and widening and altering streets and roads; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Dublin and South Eastern Railway Bill; City of Glasgow Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Seaham Harbour Dock Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (NO. 2) BILL.

Petitions against: From Greenock; and Liverpool; to lie upon the Table.

CONGO FREE STATE.

Petition from Prestwich and Whitefield, for protection of the native races; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petition from Totnes, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Ashby-de-la Zouch; Bishop Cannings; Chippenham; Devizes and District (two); and Pewsey; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Chelsea; Clydebank; and Rochdale; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Petition from Burghead, for prevention; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Darlaston, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Bury, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ELECTIONS (COLONIES).

Copy presented, of Papers relating to the Machinery and Cost of Elections in certain British Colonies [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Return showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland in the year 1907, with Statistics [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOAN FUND BOARD (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Seventieth Annual Report, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Return ordered, "of Accounts relating to the Trade and Commerce of certain Foreign Countries and British Possessions."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

North of Scotland Mail Service.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is able to state whether his recent efforts to secure more punctual arrival of the mail trains to Caithness and the North of Scotland generally have met with success; and, if not, whether he will urge upon the railway companies the necessity for greater punctuality.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am glad to be able to inform the hon. Member that the mail trains to the North of Scotland are at present working with fair punctuality. There is, therefore, no occasion for representations to the railway companies on the subject. The remedial measures which have been urged upon the companies are principally intended to meet the difficulty experienced in maintaining punctuality during the tourist season, and their effect will not be fully apparent until later in the year.

Heybridge Letter Deliveries.

MR. T. R. BETHELL (Essex, Maldon): To ask the Postmaster-General whether, having regard to the fact that Heybridge is contiguous to Maldon and in the same postal district, he can see his way to furthering the convenience of the residents of Heybridge by an extension of the evening delivery of letters.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have called for a Report on this subject, and on its receipt I will communicate with the hon. Member.

London Educational Endowments.

MR. DICKINSON (St. Pancras, N.): To ask the President of the Board of Education, whether he can give the amount of the capital fund of endowments and the sums raised by way of mortgage of the school premises which the Board have sanctioned by schemes or orders under the Charitable Trusts Acts to be expended on repairs or alterations to voluntary schools in London since the Education (London) Act came into operation.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Statement showing (i.) the amount of the capital funds of endowments (including sums raised by charge of the charity estate, other than school buildings) and (ii.) the sums raised by way of mortgage of the school premises, which the Board of Education have sanctioned by schemes or orders under the Charitable Trusts Acts to be expended on repairs or alterations to voluntary schools in London since the Education (London) Act came into operation.

(i.)

	£	s.	d.
Church of England Schools - - -	16,326	14	9
Roman Catholic Schools -	11,730	4	2
Jewish Schools - -	17,000	0	0
	45,056	18	11

(ii.)

	£	s.	d.
Church of England Schools - - -	10,450	0	0
Roman Catholic Schools -	2,500	0	0
	12,950	0	0

Totals.

	£	s.	d.
Church of England Schools - - -	26,776	14	9
Roman Catholic Schools -	14,230	4	2
Jewish Schools - -	17,000	0	0
	£58,006	18	11

Refrigerating Machinery on Battleships.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether it is the intention of the Board to fit refrigerating machinery to the magazines of ships in special reserve, such as the eight battleships of the "Royal Sovereign" class, the "Renown," the two battleships of the "Centurion" class, and the "Nile" and "Trafalgar."

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Provision has been made in the Estimates for 1908–9 for fitting the "Renown," but with this exception the reply is in the negative. If for any reason any of the ships named should be again brought forward for continuous active service in the Fleet, the question of fitting refrigerating machinery in them would be further considered.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether the full amount of £200,000 or more will be spent under the current year's Estimates for refrigerating machinery of magazines of ships; and what are the chief items in the Votes on which savings are anticipated in the letter of application to the Treasury asking for their sanction to this new expenditure without presenting a Supplementary Estimate to the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) So far as can be seen at present, it is anticipated that the expenditure in the current financial year will not fall far short of £200,000. As regards the second part of the Question, the Treasury was asked to sanction an expenditure of £200,000 on the understanding that a Supplementary Estimate would be presented if necessary. The expense, can, however, be defrayed from surpluses which have accrued on the provision for other services, principally under Votes 7, 8, Section III., 9, and 10.

Use of Firearms in Ireland.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the law proceedings at Gort, when Mr. F. Persse, J.P., was prosecuted for unlawfully discharging firearms on the public road; under what Act was the charge brought; and will he state why Mr. Brady, R.M., contrary to the expressed opinion of his brother magistrate who assisted on the occasion, marked the case dismissed, instead of, as is usual in all such cases, adjourned to next petty sessions.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The proceedings against Mr. F. Persse, J.P., were brought by the police under the Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Act, 1851. I am informed that one of the two magistrates was for a conviction and the other for an acquittal. In these circumstances it was open to the magistrates to make one or other of two orders, namely, to dismiss without prejudice to the complaint being renewed or to adjourn. The resident magistrate informs me that his fellow-magistrate expressed no desire to adjourn the case, and the usual procedure in that Court was therefore followed, that is to say, the case was dismissed without prejudice to the complaint being renewed if thought desirable.

Hertfordshire Schools.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): To ask the President of the Board of Education what is the total number of school-places in the Hertfordshire provided and non-provided elementary schools; and what was the average attendance in these schools for the years 1904–5, 1905–6, and 1906–7.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The following table gives the accomodation and average attendance in council and voluntary schools in the area of the Hertfordshire County Council for the years 1904–5, 1905–6, and 1906–7:—

Year.	Council Schools.		Voluntary Schools.		Total.	
	Accommodation.	Average attendance.	Accommodation.	Average attendance.	Accommodation.	Average attendance.
1904-5 . .	7,605	4,740	37,878	27,354	45,483	32,094
1905-6 . .	7,887	5,891	37,831	26,959	45,718	32,850
1906-7 . .	7,987	5,873	38,100	27,120	46,087	32,993

Blacker-Douglas Estate.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the untenanted land on the Blacker-Douglas estate at Tulahinal, about 400 acres, has been offered for sale by the landlord to the Estates Commissioners for the purpose of enlarging uneconomic holdings and giving plots of land to labourers; whether the land has been inspected; and, if so, when and how soon do the Estates Commissioners expect to acquire possession of the same.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The untenanted land in question is being sold by the owner at prices which have been approved by the Estates Commissioners, who are at present preparing a scheme for the distribution of the land. The Commissioners are selecting the persons who are to receive shares of the land, but they are not yet in a position to say when the selected persons can be put into possession.

North Kerry Evicted Farms.

MR. FLAVIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether T. W. Sands accepted on 8th May, 1907, the offer of the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of two evicted farms at Knockanure, North Kerry, from which C. O'Connor and Terence M'Mahon were evicted; whether the evicted tenants have since been reinstated; and, if not, will he say why this has not been done.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The vendor did not finally accept the Estates Commissioners' proposal to purchase until 28th September last. The evicted tenants referred to have been put in possession of the farms, and the Commissioners are now awaiting the receipt of undertakings to purchase signed by these men, whereupon the Commissioners will complete the purchase as from 28th September.

Oliver Estate, Listowel.

MR. FLAVIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Thomas Hannan, of Bealkilla, Listowel, a tenant on the Oliver property, has been processed and decreed and also served with a writ for the current gale's rent because he would not sign a purchase agreement at, in his opinion, an exorbitant price; whether he is aware that Mr. Hannan, being a future tenant, is debarred from having a fair rent fixed by the Court, and has asked the agent, Mr. Vandeleur, of Mallow, to allow him to have a fair rent fixed, which request has been refused; and will he say what steps the Government will take to prevent Hannan, and tenants in a similar position who are future tenants, from being harassed by the land agent.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have referred this Question to the Estates Commissioners, who inform me that no proceedings for the sale of the estate referred to have been instituted before them, and that they have no knowledge of the facts alleged in the Question. It is, of course, the fact that future tenants are debarred from entering the Land Commission Courts to get a fair rent fixed. I have already stated that the question of admitting future tenants to the benefits of the rent-fixing clauses of the Irish Land Acts will be fully considered in connection with the legislation which it is intended to introduce for the purpose of amending those Acts. I cannot go jurther than this at present.

S.S. "Egyptian"—Crew's Complaint.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the complaint of the crew of the steamer "Egyptian," who allege that whilst the vessel was at the port of Alexandria they were refused permission to go outside of the docks without a pass from the master of the vessel in their own time; and whether he can say what regulations there are in existence at Alexandria which makes it obligatory on the part of seamen to have a pass or order before they can have permission to go outside of the dock gates in their own time.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) I have received a Report on the subject, the substance of which I shall be happy to communicate to the hon Member.

Chowkidari Tax in Bengal.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India have yet approved of the proposals made by the Bengal Government to relieve the Bengal agriculturists of the inequalities of taxation to which they are at present subjected under the Chowkidari Tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Government of India have informed me that the proposals of the Bengal Government deal not only with the subject of removing inequalities of assessment, but also with the improvement of the village system and village police, and involve large and extremely difficult questions that have to be dealt with as a whole, and are still under their consideration.

Eastern Bengal Estate Schools.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has now received Captain Kennedy's Report on estate schools in Eastern Bengal and Assam; and, if so, will he consider the expediency of laying it upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I have received the Report. I think it will be sufficient to place a copy in the Library, and I will see that this is done.

Trade Statistics.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state what were the imports for Home consumption and the exports of domestic produce and manufactures, together with the total of these, for the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Germany, respectively, for the year 1907; what was the estimated population of each of these countries, respectively, for that year, and what were the imports for Home consumption and the exports of domestic produce and manufactures, together with the total of these, per head of population in each of these countries, respectively, for that year.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The following statement gives the particulars asked for by my hon. friend—

	United Kingdom.	United States.	France.	Germany.
Foreign trade:	£	£	£	£
Imports for Home consumption -	553,932,000	296,519,000	241,906,000	422,706,000
Exports of domestic produce - -	426,205,000	394,859,000	221,681,000	337,722,000
Total of above -	980,137,000	691,378,000	463,587,000	760,428,000
	Number.	Number.	Number.	Number.
Estimated population in the middle of the year	44,100,000	85,817,000	39,275,000	62,156,000
Foreign trade per head of the population:	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Imports for Home consumption -	12 11 3	3 9 1	6 3 2	6 16 0
Exports of domestic produce - -	9 13 3	4 12 0	5 12 11	5 8 8
Total of above -	22 4 6	8 1 1	11 16 1	12 4 8

Notes.—(1) The imports for Home consumption are calculated, in the case of the United Kingdom and United States, by deducting the value of the re-exports from the gross value of the imports in 1907. (2) The values of imports and exports stated in the German and French official accounts are for the most part computed on the basis of the ascertained average prices of 1906.

Railway Tickets.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will issue instructions to the various railway companies in the United Kingdom to print the amount of the fare on each ticket issued, whether for single or the return journey.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is already provided by an Order issued by the Board of Trade upon the various railway companies, pursuant to Section 6 of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1889, that, subject to certain exceptions, every passenger ticket shall bear upon its face, printed or written in legible characters, the fare chargeable for the journey for which such ticket is issued. The exceptions are: (1) Excursion and tourist tickets where the fare is advertised; (2) tickets issued in accordance with public service warrants; (3) tickets issued by special arrangement at rates less than the ordinary fare for pleasure parties, etc.; (4) tickets at rates not exceeding the ordinary fares which, in addition, include a charge for admission to a show, etc.; and (5) packets of tickets sold at reduced fares in consideration of a minimum number being purchased.

Bible Board's Clerk.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): To ask the Secretary for Scotland what the duties are of the clerk to the Bible Board and the printer's reader to the same body; and what the provisional arrangement is under which the emoluments attaching to these offices are drawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The clerk to the Bible Board acts as law agent and also discharges all the executive duties required by the Board. The reader reads and revises proofs of editions of the Bible published in Scotland. The expenses are provided with the sanction of the Treasury.

Royal Household of Scotland.

SIR JOHN TUKE (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he proposes to fill up the office of Limner in the Royal Household of Scotland, which has been vacant since the death of Sir Noel Paton seven years ago; and if he proposes to fill up the office of Historiographer in the same Royal Household, vacant since the death of Professor Masson.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty on 16th March.

Custom House Stamp Office, Dublin.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused to the commercial community of Dublin by the closing of the Stamp Office, Custom House, at the early hour of 3.45; and if he will take steps to have the office open for the sale of stamps to a later hour each day.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The Stamp Office, Custom House, Dublin, is open daily for the sale of stamps and receipt of duties until 4 o'clock, except on Saturday, when the closing hour is 1.30 o'clock. I may add that stamps are also on sale in the principal post offices in Dublin, and care is taken that the stock is sufficient for the public requirements.

Marble Arch Improvement.

MR. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, in view of the rapid progress now being made with the Marble Arch improvement, he can give an approximate date when the paving will be completed, and when the whole will be finished; whether the old iron railings and gateways are to be re-erected; what electric standards are to be used; and whether he will arrange for the drawings of the said new ironwork to be exhibited in the tea-room.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The road-making will, I hope, be finished by 1st May. The re-erection of the lodge and lavatory will take somewhat longer. The old iron railings will be used again as far as possible. The electric standards will match those in the immediate neighbourhood. The gates will be new and the drawing of them shall be placed in the tea-room.

Grantham Education Disputes.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education what is the present position of the difficulty which has arisen at Grantham between the Grantham Town Council, who wish the continued recognition of the secondary school attached to the Grantham Technical Institute, and the Kesteven local education authority and the Board of Education, who apparently wish to discontinue it.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There is not, and there never has been, a secondary school recognised by the Board under the regulations for secondary schools in connection with the Grantham Technical Institute. Day classes in science and art were recognised at the institute up to 31st July, 1905, under regulations which have now been superseded. The conditions under which these classes were conducted were not, either as regards premises, staff, or general organisation, such as would justify the Board in recognising a secondary school. There is need for a secondary school for girls in Grantham, and the Board offered, if such a school were provided in new premises, to consider the possibility of giving temporary recognition to a school in the institute until those buildings were ready. But they were not prepared to recognise a second school for boys in Grantham, since they were satisfied that the grammar school was sufficient to meet the needs of the locality. The Kesteven County Council and the Grantham Town Council were not prepared to accept the conditions laid down by the Board, and the application for recognition of a school in the institute was withdrawn on 2nd May, 1907. In August of the same year I had an interview with representatives of the county council and the town council, but the representations made did not satisfy me that I should be justified in altering the decision previously arrived at.

Hours of Work in Mines.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state generally the nature and scope of the Amendments he now considers necessary to the Bill he recently introduced for regulating the hours of work in mines.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I am not yet in a position to make any statement although, as I have once or twice indicated, I think some Amendment will be necessary.

Irish Police.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the total number of officers in the police service in Ireland; the total salary; total allowances for man-servant, horse-lodging, stationery, office, fuel and light, total allowances for travelling and subsistence, etc., during the year ended December, 1907; and whether he will state details of the salary, allowances, travelling and subsistence expenses of the county and district inspectors of the counties of Kerry and Carlow, with the number of barracks and men in each county.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The total number of county and district inspectors for whom pay and allowances are provided in the Royal Irish Constabulary Estimate for the year ending 31st instant is 240, viz., 37 county inspectors and 203 district inspectors. The annual pay of these officers amounts to £58,912; servants' allowance, £10,800; forage allowance, £11,850; lodging, fuel, and light, £8,397; stationery, £939; and office, £707; giving a total for pay and allowances of £91,605. The accounts of the Constabulary Vote do not show the subsistence and travelling of the officers apart from those of the men. The total annual pay and allowances at 31st December last of the county inspector and the eight district inspectors in County Kerry was: For pay, £2,227; lodging, £355; servants, £405; office, £18 5s.; stationery, £34; and forage, £450. In County Carlow, for the county inspector and the two district inspectors, the amounts were: For pay, £1,055; lodging, £130; servants, £135; office, £18 5s.; stationery, £16; and forage, £150. The number of barracks in County Carlow is 15 and in County Kerry 60. The number of sergeants and constables serving in County Carlow on 29th February, was 75, and in County Kerry, 325.

Carrocuill Estate, County Roscommon.

Mr. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the estate of Carrocuill, situated in the parish of Kilmore, County Roscommon, the property of Thomas Whelan, Saville, Dalkey, County Dublin, has been offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had this estate inspected, and have made a provisional offer for it which the owner has intimated his willingness to accept. The Commissioners are now awaiting the institution by the owner of formal proceedings for the sale.

Sub-Division of Irish Holdings.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many applications to the Land Commission by tenant farmers who have purchased their holdings for liberty to sub-divide the same for the purpose of sale or mortgage are now pending; between what dates have the same been received; what period of incubation has to elapse before the Land Commission consider the same; who is responsible for the delay in the department to which such applications are referred; and whether, seeing that it is a common practice to consolidate several separate holdings in the one vesting order with the result that in any subsequent dealings with any one of such holdings the consent of the Land Commission has to be obtained, steps will be taken to have these sub-divisions expedited, and thus save farmers from the loss caused by the delay in obtaining the consent of the Land Commission.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that about sixty cases are pending before them in which applications have been made for liberty to sub-divide holdings which are subject to land purchase annuities. Nearly all of these applications were received since 1st January last. The cases are in different stages of inquiry, and are dealt with as rapidly as possible in order of priority. Delay is often caused by the manner in which the applications are presented, resulting in considerable correspondence and difficulty, and by the fact that in many cases local inspection is necessary.

Irish Co-operative Trading Associations.

Sir GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, does the Government, through the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, subsidise any co-operation trading associations to the detriment of the individual enterprise of town traders in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The answer is in the negative.

Enfield Small Arms Factory—West's Case

Mr. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in the case of West, lately employed at the Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, he was sent by the shops manager to the surgery to be medically examined; whether the medical examination revealed the fact that, owing to the injuries West had received in the service, he was rendered unable to do useful work; and whether he will call for a copy of such medical report, and, in the light of it, take the case into his favourable consideration, with a view to getting some allowance made.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This case is now under the consideration of the Treasury. Will my hon. friend kindly refer to the previous replies given by my hon. friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to Questions put on this case on the 10th and 16th instant by the hon. Members for the Epping Division of Essex and Kilkenny, respectively.

Royal Field Artillery.

Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether a limited number of commissions in the Royal Field Artillery will be offered for competition amongst subalterns who serve a probationary period in the Special Reserve, Royal Field

Artillery, on conditions approximating to those previously in force for officers of Garrison Artillery Militia.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply is in the affirmative.

Franking Official Letters.

MR. TILLETT (Norwich): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will endeavour to obtain for the secretaries of the County Associations the privilege of franking all letters sent by them on official business connected with their Association.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Letters on official business addressed to the War Office or by the War Office may be sent without being prepaid. This is the only kind of franking accorded to the Army, and I am afraid it would be useless for me even to try and obtain this privilege for County Associations.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Artificer Engineers.

MR. CURRAN (Jarrow): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many artificer engineers are now carried on the engineering complements of cruisers and scouts.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): Three artificer engineers are carried in the complement of all large modern cruisers, two in the older large cruisers, and one in other cruisers and scouts.

Cadets and the Douglas Scheme.

MR. CURRAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what percentage of the whole number of cadets passing out have selected engineering under the Douglas scheme.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: None of the new scheme cadets will reach the age of specialisation for some years to come.

Petty Officers Training for Mechanician Rating.

MR. CURRAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the annual cost of the pay and victualling of the stoker petty officers undergoing a two years course of training for mechanician rating.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: £14,000, approximately.

MR. CURRAN: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow, I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the cost of officers, petty officers, and pensioned instructors; and what is the total value of the repairs executed by the stoker petty officer qualifying for mechanicians.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The first part of the Question was answered in a reply to the hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness on the 17th March. The answer to the second part of the Question is about £4,000 a year.

Wages on Admiralty Contracts.

MR. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can now say whether inquiries have been made respecting the wages paid by Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Company to employees on H.M.S. "Lord Nelson" at Jarrow and H.M.S. "Invincible" at the Elswick Works, Newcastle; and why the standard rate was departed from in the latter case.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Admiralty are still in correspondence with the firm, and I will communicate with the hon. Gentleman as soon as a definite result is reached.

Defective Cordite.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the quantity of cordite which has been destroyed since 1st January 1907, either because of deterioration or because of the presence of mercuric chloride; and whether £170 per ton would be a rough average value of this cordite, having regard to the greater cost of the larger sizes.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Admiralty consider that it would not be in the interests of the public service to make any statement on this subject.

MR. BELLAIRS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware this information must be given to Parliament within eight or nine months in the Auditor-General's Report?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: No, Sir, I am not.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that as the value of this cordite was announced in an Answer to a Question the other day, it is quite possible for one knowing the price per ton to estimate the quantity.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I do not remember that answer.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: It was £8,000.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, N.E., Blackpool): Have steps been taken to replace this cordite immediately?

[No Answer was returned.]

Rosyth Water Supply.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have yet paid their contribution to the scheme for supplying Rosyth with fresh water; and, if not, whether he can state when it is due and what it the total liability.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The new water scheme is not yet complete and no payment is due. The liability will be, approximately, £3,000 a year for forty years from the date when the supply begins.

Chelsea Barracks School of Instruction.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether income-tax is deducted from the pay and allowances paid to officers of the auxiliary forces attending the school of instruction at Chelsea Barracks or other places; and what steps should be taken to secure the repayment of such deductions in cases where the officer concerned is wholly or partly exempt from the payment of income-tax.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Income-tax is deducted in such cases from the pay and lodging allowances, unless the officers concerned claim exemption. Accountants supply them with a form of claim for the purpose. If they are not wholly exempt, the tax deducted is recoverable through the local surveyor of taxes, who deals with their income from other sources.

Madras High Court Judgeship.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the approaching retirement from the Madras High Court of Mr. Justice Boddam, a barrister judge of that Court, he will consider the advisability of appointing an Indian barrister in his place and thereby restoring to that Court a second Indian judge, and placing it in that respect on the same footing as the High Courts at Bombay and Allahabad.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): In making recommendations for filling the vacancy to which my hon. friend refers, I shall consider all the circumstances of the case, including that which he mentions.

Administration of Bengal.

*SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it has been decided to separate the exercise of judicial and executive functions in selected districts of Bengal; and, if so, whether he can indicate the means of the districts and the character of the measures it is intended to take for this purpose.

MR. MORLEY: A scheme of the nature described in the Question is under the consideration of the Government of India, but I have not as yet received definite proposals from them.

Mymensingh Disturbances.

*SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the report of a detailed local inquiry conducted by the hon. Bhupendro Nath Bose and Lieutenant-Colonel Mukherjea, I.M.S. retired, into the complaints of maltreatment made by certain inhabitants of Mymensingh; and whether, looking to the evidence showing that houses and shops were broken into by the police, that persons were assaulted by them, and property plundered, he will cause an official inquiry to be made into the facts of the case.

MR. MORLEY: As I stated in reply to a Question yesterday, the Local Government on hearing of the disturbances at once ordered an official inquiry.

Bengalese Police and the Swadeshi Movement.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the frequent appointment of punitive police in the province of Eastern Bengal; whether these punitive police are appointed to keep the peace or to suppress the growing strength of the Swadeshi or national movement; whether the villages in which these police are stationed are the strongholds of this movement; whether the Mahomedan inhabitants of these villages have been exempted generally from payment of a tax for the maintenance of these police; whether Hindus who are unsympathetic with the Swadeshi movement have been taxed lightly or altogether exempted; and whether he will inquire into the matter with a view of relieving what is represented to be a grievous burden on the people concerned.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers this Question, may I ask whether the argumentative part is accepted as well as the interrogatory?

MR. MORLEY: That needs a more elaborate examination of this question than I have yet given it. My hon. friend is no doubt aware that by the law of India (Police Act, 1861, section 15) it is necessary, before additional police can be quartered in any area at the cost of the inhabitants, that the local government shall declare, by proclamation in the Official Gazette, that "the area has been found to be in a disturbed or dangerous state, or that, from the conduct of the inhabitants of such area or of any class or section of them, it is expedient to increase the number of police." I have no reason to suppose that the Local Government has failed in its duty, where it has ordered additional police to be quartered on any locality in Eastern Bengal; or that it has apportioned the cost upon any class or section of the inhabitants with reference to political movements and opinion. I do not propose to make any inquiry into the matter.

*SIR H. COTTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the Sherpore case, which was referred to yesterday, the only Hindu exempted is a gentleman well known for his antagonism to the national movement, whereas all the Mahomedans have been exempted? Will he inquire into that?

MR. MORLEY: Yes, Sir. I will.

Afghan Boundary.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the boundary of the map of Afghanistan, which has been placed in the Library, is to be accepted as indicating that the external frontier of His Majesty's possessions in India is conterminous with that boundary; if so, from what date has the boundary of that external frontier been so laid down; and, seeing that the territory of the Zakka Khel lies within that frontier and is a portion of His Majesty's possessions in India within the meaning of Section 55 of the Act of 1858 for the better government of India, whether this fact implies that the Zakka Khel territory, as well as all the other frontier territory up to the Afghan boundary, is already within the possession or occupation of the Indian Government.

MR. MORLEY: The boundary with Afghanistan shown on the map forms the external frontier of His Majesty's possessions in India. The boundary was laid down in the Agreement with the Amir of 12th November, 1893, well known as the Durand Agreement. The map shows how far the boundary has been defined by demarcation. All territories up to the boundary form part of His Majesty's British Possessions, but neither Zakka Khel territory, nor that of other tribes on the North-west frontier is under direct British administration.

Indian Immigration to Natal.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the Report of Mr. Harry Smith, Principal Immigration Restriction Officer of Natal, for the year 1907, proposing among other things that the Immigration Department should have power to nominate the European language which is to be used to test the fitness of Indians wishing to enter the Colony as free men; and whether the effect of giving such power to the Immigration Department would be to enable that Department to exclude from a British Colony British-Indians who are perfectly conversant with the English language but who failed to pass a test in German, Russian, or Yiddish.

MR. MORLEY: The Report has not been seen either by myself or by my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies. It has not been received at either office.

Dinizulu—Natal Government Reply to Mr. Jellicoe.

MR. LEHMANN (Leicestershire, Market Harborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies has received any communication from the Government of Natal making any answer to the allegations made in Mr. Jellicoe's letter of 7th February to the Governor of Natal.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHRUCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): Yes, Sir. The reply is contained in a telegram from the Governor as follows:—"10th March. No. 1. Ministers have requested that the following Minute should be telegraphed to your Lordship:—Ministers received on 7th March His Excellency's Minute of 6th March, forwarding for Ministers' information a letter by Mr Jellicoe to you dated 7th February, and which was received by His Excellency on 12th February, 1908. Ministers regret that such a letter should have been addressed to His Excellency by a gentleman who had become a member of the Natal Bar, more especially because of the sinister attempt made in the first page of that letter to involve His Excellency in the first section of the libels therein contained. Ministers understand that His Excellency took steps through the medium of Reuter's Agency at an early date to disavow the association of 'common ground' claimed by Mr. Jellicoe with His Excellency, a step rendered the more necessary because the writer of this letter appears to have secured publication of his letter before the original could even have reached your hands. With reference to the remaining portion of that letter, comprising nine pages of type-written foolscap, it consists in the main of a series of statements again so patently false as to make the letter too contemptible for notice by this Government, notwith tanding that the writer held the position of an English barrister (as)? at the time he indited it and was retained in his professional capacity as alleged by him 'with the concurrence of the Colonial Office' for the defence of Dinizulu. There the comment of Ministers might end but for Mr. Jellicoe's allegation that he is sending a copy of his despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. So that the Secretary of State for the Colonies may not possibly be misled by statements which in this Colony require no refutation, Ministers would be glad if his Excellency would cable this Minute to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Now that Ministers have received this letter officially from his Excellency and also learn that it has been published in England, Ministers think it is their duty to send his Excellency the foregoing comments on the letter and to ask that this Minute should be given publicity at an early date." I should add that the Secretary of State's telegram of 19th December, published at page 180 of Cd. 3888, explains the attitude of the Colonial Office in regard to Mr. Jellicoe's visit to Natal.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): May I ask whether the Colonial Office possesses, without having to create it, any machinery by which the Imperial Government could order an independent inquiry into these charges? They are widely believed in this country. I, for one, believe them.

MR CHURCHILL: No. We do not possess any machinery, except that we can ask a Colonial Government for specific answers to specific questions. I have been asked whether we have received a reply. I have read the reply. That is a matter of fact that I am bound to put before the House, but the House will see that the statement is of a general character, and we have asked for more specific answers to specific matters. I trust that the answers to these will be as conclusive and satisfactory as is the general one.

*MR. REES: Is the Mr. Jellicoe mentioned in this Question the same learned gentleman who has just now prosecuted an appeal in the case of two Zulus convicted of sedition, in which case the Judicial Committee found that no in-injustice had been done by the Native High Court in Natal?

MR. CHURCHILL: The life history of Mr. Jellicoe is not sufficiently known to me to enable me to answer that Question.

Anglo-Siamese Treaty.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a treaty is now being negotiated between this country and Siam under which two tributary provinces of Lower Siam are to be ceded to Great Britain in consideration of the surrender by this country of certain extra-territorial rights; when the treaty is likely to be signed; and when it may be expected to be laid upon the Table of this House.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): As I informed the hon. Member for West Bristol on the 16th instant, I cannot answer Questions on this subject till I have had an opportunity of considering the terms of the draft, which has not yet reached me.

Workmen's Compensation—Medical Referees.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any case has been considered by the medical referees appointed under the Workmen's Compensation Act; and, if so, in what trade and with what result.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The total number of cases considered by medical referees in the six months from the 1st July, 1907, the date on which the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, came into force, up to the 31st December, 1907, after which date figures are not yet available, is 117. The mumbers in the respective branches of employment were as follows—

Railways	4
Factories	27
Mines	64
Engineering	2
Building	9
Agriculture	3
Not stated	8

I cannot give the results as the reports of the referees are not made to the Home Office, but to County Court Judges and other persons; such information as is furnished to the Home Office being principally required for the proper payment of the fees. I should like to add that I do not think any trustworthy inference as to the working of the provisions of the new Act can be drawn from the results of the first six months of its operation.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Are steps being taken to secure that the medical referees appointed have not previously been interested in the cases as certifying surgeons or in any other manner?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, that is done.

Convictions of Licensed Victuallers.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state when the criminal statistics for 1907 will be issued; and whether, in the meantime, he can state the number of convictions against licensed victuallers during that year in respect of offences other than those referred to in the recently issued licensing statistics.

MR. GLADSTONE: It is not expected that the criminal statistics for 1907 can be completed before the end of the present year. The offences by licensed persons shown in Table V. of the recently issued volume of licensing statistics include all offences by licensed persons as such. As regards other offences there are no statistics differentiating between licensed persons and other members of the community.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he intends to proceed with the Second Reading of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill; and if he is aware of the number of memorials against the measure being daily received by Members from all parts of Ireland.

MR. GLADSTONE: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. As to the second, I have received three memorials from Ireland, but I do not know how other hon. Members have fared.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the grave inconvenience which is being caused and the difficulty of entering into contracts for future delivery while the Government are wobbling on this subject?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am quite satisfied there is no inconvenience.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries in Ireland?

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): And in England, too?

[No Answer was returned.]

Metropolitan Police Stations.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Metropolitan police stations have yet been connected with the general telephone system; and, if so, what has been the effect?

MR. GLADSTONE: Fifty-nine Metropolitan police stations out of a total of 192, or 30·7 per cent., are connected with the public telephone system. 123 stations, or 64 per cent., are connected by the police telephone system. The additional facilities of communication thus provided have proved an advantage to police work. I am just adding fifty-eight out-lying divisional stations to the number.

Limited Liability Companies and the Franchise.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that upon a man, for family reasons or otherwise, converting his business into a limited liability company he is at once disfranchised in respect to such premises; and if he will consider as to the practicability of so amending the law that a limited liability company by its directors, under its own seal, may appoint one representative who would thereupon be able to serve and vote in regard to such premises.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): Perhaps I may answer this Question. I am aware that a company cannot exercise the franchise, notwithstanding that it owns or occupies premises, the ownership or occupation of which would in the case of an individual confer a right of voting; but I am not able to promise to introduce legislation on the subject.

Traction Engines on Roads.

MR. LYELL (Dorsetshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called by local authorities to the damage done to roads by traction engines and heavy locomotives, especially after the break up of a frost; and whether he will consider the advisability of giving, by legislation or otherwise, to local authorities power to regulate and at certain seasons to prohibit the use of traction engines.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have received some communications on this subject, and one has recently reached me from the Dorset County Council. The question is one of some difficulty. It was considered by the Departmental Committee on Highway Authorities and Administration. That Committee did not see their way to adopt a proposal that officials of the highway authority should be empowered to stop road-engines from using the roads on occasions when rendered unsuitable for passage by the state of the weather, and could only suggest that there should be a power for recovering from the owners of the engines damages for injury caused by their traversing the roads in unsuitable weather. I cannot promise to undertake legislation on the subject, but I shall be happy to consider any suggestions that may be laid before me for meeting the difficulty.

Farm Colonies.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board from what sources the funds of the Hollesley Bay, Laindon, and South Ockenden settlements are derived.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The cost of maintaining the farm colonies at Hollesley Bay and Ockenden is in the main defrayed by payments to the Central (Unemployed) Body for London and the West Ham Distress Committee, respectively, from the Parliamentary grant in aid of expenditure under the Unemployed Workmen Act 1905. The cost of maintaining the branch workhouse at Laindon is defrayed out of the common fund of the Poplar Union. In each case the value of the produce of the farm which is sold or consumed must be taken into account.

Hertfordshire Schools.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what is the total number of school places in the Hertfordshire provided and non-provided elementary schools; and what was the average attendance in these schools for the years 1904-5, 1905-6, and 1906-7.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): If my hon. friend will allow me, I will circulate with the Votes a table giving the information he requires.

*MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that between the years 1902 and 1905 the non-provided schools referred to in the Question received voluntary donations from Churchmen in Hertfordshire amounting to £25,000?

[No Answer was returned.]

Hertfordshire Higher Education Rate.

MR. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what proportion of the twopenny limit for higher education is levied by the Hertfordshire local education authority.

MR. MCKENNA: The financial statement of the Hertfordshire County Council for the year 1906-7 has not yet been received, but I am informed that during the current year the local authority have raised or are raising £9,000 from the rates in respect of education other than elementary, which would be equivalent to a rate of about 1¼d. in the £.

Hertfordshire Secondary Schools and Training Colleges.

MR. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education how many secondary schools and training colleges there are in Hertfordshire; how many of them impose sectarian tests upon their teachers or students; and whether the sectarian secondary schools and training colleges are subsidised out of the rate that is levied for higher education.

MR. MCKENNA: There are twelve secondary schools in Hertfordshire receiving grants from the Board,' eleven of which are aided by the local education authority. In none of them are sectarian tests imposed on teachers or students. Seven other secondary schools, not on the Grant List, are known to the Board, but I have no complete information as to whether sectarian tests are imposed or rate-aid is given. There is one training college, imposing sectarian tests on teachers and students, which is not aided by the local authority.

Kirkburton School.

MR LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he has sanctioned any grant from the £100,000 allotted for the provision of provided schools in single-school areas for a new school at Kirkburton; and whether he is aware that the three existing schools at Kirkburton have been scheduled as unsatisfactory by the local education authority for some time previous to their application for assistance from this grant.

MR. MCKENNA: No, Sir. No grant has yet been sanctioned. I understand that the managers of the three existing schools have been required by the local education authority to execute certain improvements, which have not yet been carried out, and that the schools have therefore been scheduled by the authority as unsatisfactory.

*MR. H. J. WILSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth): Has the right hon. Gentleman received a numerously signed memorial from parents asking for a provided school?

MR McKENNA: Yes, Sir. I am now considering it.

MR. LANE-FOX: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the trustees of the existing Church school at Kirkburton have offered to build a school free of cost to the ratepayers, and to provide therein full facilities for Nonconformist religious teaching; and whether, under the circumstances, he will sanction the building of a new council school.

MR. McKENNA: There is a proposal before the Board on behalf of the trustees of the Kirkburton Church Schools to provide a new school with facilities for religious instruction of an undenominational character. As I stated on the 18th February, the questions involved are extremely complicated and the matter is still under consideration. I am not yet in a position to say whether the provision of a new council school will be sanctioned.

School Places in the West Riding.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state the number of new school places already sanctioned by the West Riding County Council in enlargements and new schools in that riding; and whether there are 1,660 fewer children on the registers than on the appointed day.

MR. McKENNA: I cannot say how many new school places have been sanctioned by the West Riding County Council since the appointed day, but 18,552 school places have actually been provided in council schools. I have no statistics as to the number of children on the registers on the appointed day, which was the 1st April, 1904, but the average attendance in the year 1906–7, the last year for which figures are available, was 3,222 greater than in the year 1904–5.

MR. CARLILE: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the Question as to the number of places already sanctioned by the West Riding authorities?

MR. McKENNA: I said 18,552 had been actually provided.

MR. CARLILE: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstands the Question. I want to know the number sanctioned to be provided.

MR. McKENNA: I have not that information.

MR. LANE-FOX: In view of the enormous excess of school places over average attendance in the West Riding, will the right hon. Gentleman use his influence to prevent this undue burden being thrown on the ratepayers?

MR. McKENNA: I have no figures before me which justify me in agreeing that there is an enormous excess of school places.

MR. LANE-FOX: Do not the figures show an excess of 80,000?

MR. McKENNA: I am not aware of the basis on which they were reckoned.

Barwick-in-Elmet School.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the Church school at Barwick-in-Elmet is admittedly overcrowded, that the children from Scholes attend the Barwick-in-Elmet school and have to be conveyed from there by cart, and that the West Riding local education authority have applied for a grant from his £100,000 to build a provided school at Barwick; and whether he will require the new school to be built at Scholes.

MR. McKENNA: The Barwick-in-Elmet school is not at present technically overcrowded. On the 10 square feet basis there would be a slight deficiency in the accommodation available for older children. I understand that the children from Scholes are conveyed to Barwick. The local authority have applied for a grant in aid of the provision of a new council school, and their application is now before the Board. The most convenient situation for the proposed school is, of course, one of the elements to be considered.

MR. CARLILE: Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that the school will be built at Scholes?

MR. McKENNA: No, Sir; that would be giving a decision without hearing all the parties concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the difference between overcrowding and technical overcrowding?

MR. McKENNA: There is usually an allowance of a certain percentage made beyond the actual average attendance A school might have places enough for the actual average attendance, but not enough to cover the additional percentage. That would be technical overcrowding.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): Does not this technical overcrowding involve the overcrowding of class-rooms on certain days when the average attendance is slightly exceeded, and does not the Board of Education consistently set its face against that?

MR. McKENNA: Yes, Sir; and the Board would gladly see that avoided, but it is very difficult to call on local authorities to supply new buildings at great expense in order to make special provision for every day in the year.

Contracted-Out Schools in London.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will favourably consider the question of an increased grant being given to contracted-out schools in London, in view of the greater cost per child in elementary schools in London as compared with the rest of England and Wales.

MR. McKENNA: I regret I can only renew the answer which I have previously given that questions of this nature can be more conveniently dealt with in debate on the Bill, when discussion of the reply is possible.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: But will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of fixing a definite proportion which will prevent the penalising of contracted-out schools in the Metropolis?

MR. McKENNA: I deprecate any question being addressed to me now. I will endeavour to deal with these points when the Bill is under discussion.

The Zoological Gardens.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works how many acres of Regent's Park are being appropriated by the Zoological Society under the extension now in progress; whether the public using the Park have obtained any, and what, facilities in consideration of this diminution in the area available for their use; whether he will make arrangements to secure that the public may have an uninterrupted view through open fence work, and unobstructed by walls, shrubs, or buildings, into that part of the Park which is now being transferred to the Zoological Society; and on what terms this transfer of a portion of the public Park is being made to a private society.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): Three acres have been appropriated to the Zoological Society from Regent's Park on an annual agreement for the nominal rent of £5 per annum. I made it a special consideration of this extension of the Gardens that there should always be a free show of animals towards the Park on a portion of the new site granted to the Society, and I am glad that I have thus been able to afford to the poorer children of the Parks a gratuitous addition to their rare pleasures.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for the erection of a double railing at this part of the boundary?

MR. HARCOURT: I have already provided for a double railing in order to protect the animals, as well as to give pleasure to the children.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that no public rights are parted with?

MR. HARCOURT: No public rights can be parted with. The agreement is an annual one and is renewable at the pleasure of the Crown.

North-east Coast Fishing Industry.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he has received a memorial from the fishermen of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, asking for an inquiry into the condition of the fishing industry on the North-east Coast; whether he is aware of the poverty and distress existing among the line fishermen and their dependants along the North-east Coast; and, if so, can he state whether the Government intend to grant such an inquiry, or to take any steps to relieve the existing distress.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): The Board have received from the Board of Trade a communication on the subject to which my hon. friend refers. Inquiry will be made into the matter without delay.

Gooseberry Mildew.

MR. RAPHAEL (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that at Melbourne, in Derbyshire, instances have occurred that, two days after nurseries have been declared by the inspector of the Board of Agriculture to be clear of mildew, notice has been received declaring the same nurseries to be infected premises, thereby closing the nurseries against the removal of trees by sale or otherwise; is he aware that notice is given not for actual but for the supposed existence of mildew; and if he will give orders that undue restrictions be not placed upon an industry on which numbers of people depend for their livelihood.

MR. J. A. PEASE (for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): The Board are able, they believe, to identify the particular case to which my hon. friend refers. It was detected in October last by an inspector of the Board and the local authority were duly informed, but owing to an oversight the formal notification of the existence of the disease was not served on the owner by the local authority until the 20th ulto. Some misunderstanding appears to have arisen as to the statements made by the inspector on again visiting the premises. He was satisfied that all visible evidence of disease had been removed from the bushes in the main nursery in the manner contemplated by the American Gooseberry Mildew Order. But in view of the character of this disease, the Order requires that certain restrictions shall remain in force until the expiration of the year following that in which the disease was last seen on the premises. The premature removal of the restrictions from premises which contain bushes for sale would involve grave risks of spreading this serious disease. The inspector will again visit the premises and explain the nature of our requirements. The Answer to the concluding inquiry of my hon. friend is of course in the affirmative.

Weighing Machines in Scottish Markets.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether in every market in Scotland for the sale of live stock a weighing machine must be provided; if so, will he say whose duty it is to see that a weighing machine is so provided; whether the authorities are required to see, in the interests of public health, that in all markets where those weighing machines are provided that all animals for sale should be inspected by the veterinary surgeon appointed by the local authority in that district, and certified as to their fitness for human food; and whether he will issue instructions for the guidance of all local authorities in Scotland fixing a basis of inspection, so that there may be a uniform practice, and to prevent the confusion that now exists owing to there being different standards of inspection.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): There is no provision requiring local authorities to see that animals exposed for sale in any market, whether provided with weighing machines or not, are inspected by a veterinary surgeon and certified as to their fitness for human food. There is no power to fix a standard of inspection; but on the 19th October, 1899, the Local Government Board for Scotland issued a circular suggesting that in the inspection of tuberculous carcases of cattle the principles laid down in the Report of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis of 1898 should be followed. There is no intention to recommend any standard for the inspection of living animals.

Moray Firth Trawlers.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby) had on the Paper the following Question: To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that to carry out the decision of the High Court of Justiciary, Scotland, and prosecute all foreign trawlers fishing outside the three-mile limits in the Moray Firth would constitute a breach of International Law; whether he has been informed that that is the opinion of the Foreign Office; and whether he will immediately take steps to withdraw the British cruisers which at present protect these fishing grounds for the exclusive use and advantage of foreigners, and remove restrictions which prevent British fishermen from trawling in these waters.

On being called upon to put the Question the hon. Member said: I have been requested by the right hon. Gentleman to postpone this, and I do so for one week, but I hope he will give me an assurance that in the interval he will not prosecute any of my constituents.

[No Answer was returned.]

Scottish Fishery Board "Spies."

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Scottish Fishery Board have appointed spies at different points along the coast of Scotland to report British fishing vessels, and, if so, what is the qualification and what the remuneration for such work; whether Dr. James Maxwell, of Tobermory, Mull, Argyleshire, is one of them; and whether he is aware that the steam trawler "Crane" was wrecked on her homeward voyage from Iceland on the evening of 25th February, and that Maxwell sent a telegram to the fishery cruiser "Minna," causing her to steam several hours in order to catch the steam trawler "Crane" at work fishing in forbidden waters.

MR. SINCLAIR: So far as I am aware the reply to the three Questions put by the hon. Member is in the negative.

Glasgow Cattle Sale Yards.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state how many inspectors employed to inspect cattle in public sale yards in Glasgow are qualified as veterinary surgeons; and whether he has any official information showing that cattle unfit for food in Dublin are sent to Glasgow to be consumed there.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am informed that there are six qualified veterinary surgeons in Glasgow who act as inspectors for inspecting cattle in public sale yards. Three act under the Diseases of Animals Acts, and three under the Public Health Acts. None of these inspectors have any official information from Dublin that cattle unfit for human food are sent to Glasgow to be consumed there. In all such cases, however, the carcases of the animals are seized and destroyed.

MR. CATHCART WASON: How many inspectors are there in Glasgow?

MR. SINCLAIR: I must ask for notice. I have informed the House that a full Report on meat inspection in Scotland by the Local Government Board is being printed, and will be issued, and I suggest it would be useful if Questions on the subject were deferred till after its publication.

Scottish Education Bill.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can now state the intentions of the Government with regard to the introduction of an Education Bill for Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am unable to make any further statement at present. I hope to do so before Easter.

Skigersta Sea-Wall—Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed at a recent meeting at

Ness, Stornoway, Island of Lewis, representing 4,000 inhabitants of the Ness district, and pressing for the construction of a sea-wall and boat-shelter at Skigersta, Island of Lewis, in order that the people may be enabled to prosecute the deep sea line-fishing by means of the larger-sized decked boats, the in-shore line-fishing being no longer remunerative owing to the action of illegal trawlers.

MR. SINCLAIR: Yes, Sir.

MR. WEIR: Am I to get no further information than this? Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to do anything towards the construction of a sea-wall?

MR. SINCLAIR: My hon. friend asked if I had received a copy of the resolution and I have said that I have.

MR. WEIR: As the other half of the Question appears to have been quite lost sight of I will put another Question down.

MR. SINCLAIR: My hon. friend may rely on it that all such requests are most carefully considered.

Orkney and Shetland Water Supply.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware of the fact that certain districts in Orkney and Shetland (while they have ample water for the normal population) are embarrassed by having to provide water for the population flocking in during the fishing season, and are unable to cope with the difficulties of the situation; and, in view of the general importance of the fishing industry, if he will abide by his original decision to grant such a sum to the said districts as will enable them to meet the special demand at certain times, provided the districts referred to will bear their fair share of any increased benefit they receive.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am generally aware of the position described by my hon. friend, and the matter will be borne in mind. I am not aware that I have given any such decision as that referred to in the Question.

Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he intends to oppose the Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill.

MR. SINCLAIR: Yes, Sir.

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say why he intends to oppose it?

MR. SINCLAIR: This is a measure containing proposals which are, and, I have no doubt, are intended to be, of a drastic character. It is likely to be highly controversial, and therefore it is not possible for me to hold out to my hon. friend any hope of the Government's being able to extend to him facilities necessary to its consideration.

MR. MORTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Sheriff in delivering judgment in a case at Campbelltown the other day said——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of that Question.

MR. WEIR: Is it the intention of the Scottish Office to oppose the Bills of all private Members which are of a controversial character? That is a new method——[Cries of "Order, order!"]

*MR. SPEAKER: That hardly arises out of the Question.

MR. MORTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to compel trawlers to obey the law?

*MR. SPEAKER: That, too, hardly arises out of the Question.

Irish Fisheries.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps are being taken to develop the herring fishing along the coast of Kerry and Cork.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Congested Districts Board have made loans for boats and gear for the fisheries on the coasts of Kerry and Cork, and have provided materials to the value of £9,372 for local coopers to make barrels for cured mackerel and herring. The

Board have also paid for the instruction of coopers in barrel making, and have given instruction locally in the curing of herrings. They have also made provision for erecting lights in Kenmare River in the coming year, for the benefit of the herring fishery. I gather that one of the chief difficulties in respect of the development of the herring fishery on the coasts of Kerry and Cork is that the mackerel fishery is there looked upon as being of greater importance, and the fishermen are generally engaged in it at the time when herrings visit the coast.

Captain CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the State aid given to the fishing on the Cork and Kerry coasts interferes by competition with the fisheries on the County Down coast, which do not receive any Government grant?

Mr. BIRRELL: I have not heard that before.

Captain CRAIG: Will you make inquiries?

Mr. BIRRELL: I am quite willing to do so.

Maynooth College.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Maynooth Roman Catholic College is open to Protestants; whether he is aware that, under the original Bill of 1795, the college was restricted to Roman Catholics only, and that in 1817 all laity were excluded; and if it is the intention of the Government in any way to modify the *status* of Maynooth under the scheme at present under their consideration.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman, in his proposed University Bill, make provision for completing the education of hon. Members from Ulster?

Mr. BIRRELL: Maynooth College is not now, and never has been, open to Protestants. In 1817 the lay college was closed, and Maynooth became a place of education for Catholic ecclesiastical students only. For the details of the Government's scheme for University education, I must ask the hon. and gallant Member to wait for a week or two until the measure is introduced.

Doon Untenanted Lands.

Mr. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether any communications have ever passed between the Estates Commissioners and Messrs. Maunsell, Dixon, and Chatterton about the sale of the untenanted lands on their estate in Lackanagoneeny, Doon, County Limerick, to the Estates Commissioners for the benefit of the poor tenants and labourers of the district; have the Estates Commissioners sent an inspector on the lands; and, if so, who was the inspector, and when did he come there; what was the result of the inquiry; and what is the cause of the delay in carrying out the sale.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have had an inspection made of the estate in question, and have made a provisional offer for the same which the owners have expressed their willingness to accept. The Commissioners are now preparing a scheme for the division of the untenanted lands on the estate, and as soon as this has been completed the purchase will be proceeded with.

Irish Crown Jewels.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has any further information to give the House regarding the loss of the Crown and other jewels from Dublin Castle; whether they have been returned, or does he know where they are; and can he state the nature of the offence for which Sir Arthur Vicars was dismissed his office.

Mr. BIRRELL: I have no further information to give regarding the loss of the Crown jewels. They have not been returned, nor do I know where they are. Sir Arthur Vicars has been relieved of his office because he failed to exercise due vigilance and proper care as custodian of the Regalia of the Order of St. Patrick.

English Land Valuation Bill.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the English Land Valuation Bill will be introduced before or after the Easter vacation.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The Bill will not be introduced until after Easter.

Income-Tax.

MR. WHITEHEAD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether persons who gave notice before 30th September, 1907, of their intention to claim relief under Section 19 of The Finance Act, 1907, in the event of their income proving at the end of the financial year to be less than £2,000, will be treated as having made a claim under Sub-section 4 of that section and will be assessed accordingly; and, if not, whether he will this session amend The Finance Act so as to give relief to such persons.

I beg also to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether persons engaged in business and making claim at the end of the financial year to repayment of income-tax, on the ground that the actual income from their business has proved to be less than the expectation based on an average of three years profits, will also be entitled to have the tax on their earned income assessed on the footing of 9d. in the £, if their total income falls below £2,000 by reason of their actual realised income from business having fallen below the statutory expectation.

MR. ASQUITH: Where a person claims relief under Section 19 of The Finance Act, 1907, before 30th September in any year, but is unable at the time of lodging the claim to complete it by proving that his total income does not then exceed £2,000, he would be allowed, subsequently, to complete the claim and obtain relief in the event of his income for the year as finally ascertained falling within the prescribed limit. For the purposes of this section, however, income must be estimated according to the rules and directions of the Income Tax Acts. In the case of a business assessable on the average profits of the three years preceding the year of assessment, the income of the person who carries it on is reckoned on the basis of that average, not only for the purposes of the charge, but also for the purpose of ascertaining his right to exemption, abatement, or relief to the 9d. rate. The actual profits of the year may exceed the average, or may fall short of it, but in neither alternative, except in a few special cases, is the liability or the right to exemption, abatement, or relief for that year affected.

Budget Suggestions.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made in arriving at a definite conclusion in regard to the expediency of taxing advertisements, racing stakes, betting, titles, theatre tickets, share certificates, and imposing an employment tax and a graduated receipt tax.

MR. ASQUITH: I can only say with regard to this and similar suggestions that my mind is still in a receptive state.

Post Office Savings Bank.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the sum of £88,190 is estimated to be required to make good the deficiency in the Post Office Savings Bank in the year 1908–9; and whether he will consider what steps can be taken to relieve the taxpayer of the obligation to pay a subsidy to those persons who invest their savings in the Post Office rather than in some other form of investment.

MR. ASQUITH: A Select Committee of this House in 1902 considered what steps should be taken to make good the deficiency on the Income Account of the Post Office Savings Banks Fund which would result from the reduction of the interest on Consols in 1903. They recommended that the rate of interest allowed to depositors should be reduced by one-eighth per cent. The late Government took the sense of the House of Commons on that proposal, and decided, with the general approval of the House, not to carry it into effect, because conditions had altered since the date of the Committee's inquiry in such a way as to increase the earning power of the National Debt Commissioners on new investments, and to hold out some prospect of the account being balanced without a reduction of interest. I see no sufficient reason at present for departing from that policy;

but the subject is one which requires to be, and is, kept steadily in view.

Sessional Arrangements

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government intend to shorten the Easter and Whitsuntide holidays, to rise for the summer holidays early in July, and to hold an autumn session, or what information he can give to the House upon the subject.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet in a position to make any statement.

The Budget.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes to introduce the Budget before Easter.

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's), asked as to the arrangements for business next week.

MR. ASQUITH said that the first business on Monday would be the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, followed by the Second Reading of the Army Annual Bill. On Tuesday, the Second Reading of the Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill, as it was necessary to pass that Bill before Easter with the view to the Criminal Appeal Act coming into effective operation. That Bill would be followed by the Second Reading of the Children's Bill and the Committee stage of the Consolidated Fund Bill. On Wednesday, the Committee stage of the Prosecution of Offences Bill, the Committee on the Army Annual Bill, and the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill. On Thursday, the Government proposed to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: Cannot the Army Annual Bill be taken in the afternoon on Wednesday so as to avoid an all-night sitting?

MR. ASQUITH: It is our intention to to take the Army Bill early; the Prosecution of Offences Bill is not contentious and will not excite discussion.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: When will the Licensing Bill be proceeded with?

MR. ASQUITH: The Second Reading will be taken before Easter.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Secretary Gladstone, and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. McKenna, Mr. Lough, and Sir Edward Strachey.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill): Mr. Carlile, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Butcher, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Arkwright, Sir Francis Lowe, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Ben, Mr. Yoxall, Mr. Adkins, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. Montagu, Mr. John William Taylor, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Nicholls.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill: Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Summerbell, Mr. Charles Duncan, Mr. Lief Jones, Mr. Scott, Mr. Esslemont, Mr. Watt, Mr. Guinness, Sir Frederick Banbury, Sir Gilbert Parker, Mr. Du Cros, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. Strauss, and Mr. Clement Edwards.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added the following Member to Standing Committee B: Mr. Charles Craig.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords],—That they have appointed a Committee consisting of Five Lords to join with a Committee of this House to consider the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill, and they request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

That they propose that the said Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A, on Tuesday next, at Three of the Clock.

NEW BILLS.

BUXTON CHARITY BILL.

"To confirm a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Buxton (Congregational Chapel) Charity," presented by Mr. Trevelyan; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 164.]

LONG ASHTON CHARITY BILL.

"To confirm a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Long Ashton (Congregational Chapel Schoolroom) Charity," presented by Mr. Trevelyan; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 165.]

ABBOTS BROMLEY CHARITY BILL.

"To confirm a Scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Abbots Bromley (Congregational Chapel) Charity," presented by Mr. Trevelyan; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 166.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided: Ayes, 273; Noes, 73. (Division List No. 49.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N. E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A (Finsbury, E.
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo
Bennett, E. N.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J (S. Pancras, W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)

Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Lief (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal,E.)
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Crae, George
M‘Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morrell, Philip
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Robert William
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Redmond, John E.(Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Rt.Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, SirGScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant,SirEdward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W. H(Somerset,E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood. T. M‘Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,RtHn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barrie,H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt. Hn.Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt HnJ.A.(Worc.
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,CaptainJames(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fletcher, J. S.
Gardner, Ernest
Glover, Thomas
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hill, Sir Clement
Lambton, Hon.Frederick Wm.

Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan Thomas Henry
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

SUPPLY [10TH MARCH] REPORT [4TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Second Resolution — Navy Estimates, 1908–9. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,306,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants-in-Aid, and other Charges connected therewith which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."—read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

*MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis) said that this Vote, when in Committee, went through with about an hour and a half's discussion, and as it involved two very important new items it was very desirable that it should be discussed on the Report stage as well. The Vote itself used to have a great deal more discussion in previous Parliaments, but last year certainly there was very little debate, and there was all the more reason now, with the two new items of the lock at Portsmouth and the Rosyth scheme, that something should be said about the matter. It was a Vote with regard to which they had undergone great disillusionment. They had seen many schemes introduced to the House, paid for by Works Bills, and then abandoned. In the last four years, four dockyards and three coaling stations had been abandoned by the Government, and expenditure had been incurred on them right up till the last moment. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty told them last year that no less than five docks had been paid for in the Loans Bill, for which they would go on paying interest for twenty-five years to come, and those five docks would not take "Invincibles." There was the Dover expenditure of three and a half millions which was begun by the right hon. Gentleman the Financial Secretary for the Admiralty, who introduced the scheme thirteen years ago, and that harbour, on which they had spent a colossal sum, had never yet accommodated a single squadron or fleet, and he did not know when it was ever likely to. If the House would do as he had done, and read all the various Works Bills introduced, and the discussions on Vote 10, they would find that it had never been proved that such schemes were vital to the safety of the country. He would take as an example one of the ablest speeches delivered in that House in support of a Works Bill, by the Civil Lord of the Admiralty in 1899. He ranged over the whole Vote, and came to Bermuda, and said that our Colonies and our trade were very great in that part of the world. That was held to be a justification for an expenditure of £600,000 on a dock which had never yet accommodated a single armoured ship unless in the last few months. He said that another place was Simon's Bay, where a new dock was required, at a cost of £3,600,000, because the harbour there was so crowded. That had since been reduced to £3,100,000, and he had no doubt the present Government would like to have lowered the whole lot off. That work might easily have been brought about by subsidising a dock extension. At the same time, they incurred a small expenditure of £159,000 for a dock at Colombo by means of a subsidy. Whereas they were going to spend £3,600,000 to obtain the services of a dock and basin at Simon's Bay, they resorted to the method of a subsidy of the small sum of £159,000 at Colombo, and that was the method he would particularly commend to the attention of the House as preferable to any Rosyth scheme. Finally, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty got to Hong Kong, and said that our interests in the Far East were very great and increasing. Bang went £1,250,000. They had a magnificent private dock at Hong Kong. He himself was there when this expenditure was first proposed, and he knew that the private establishment was well able to cope with the work required. He had no doubt the Admiralty now regarded the dock accommodation provided at Hong Kong as a bit of a white elephant. He did not quarrel with the provision of more docks, but said we ought to have many more docks; it was perfectly obvious to everybody. In ten years we should have forty or fifty "Dreadnoughts" and "Invincibles" clamouring for dock accommodation, and he thought there were now six Government docks, including Haulbowline, and ten private docks, available for them. He was not quite sure of the figures, because if the Civil Lord would examine his speech he would find that he and the First Lord differed considerably in their statements as to the numbers of docks available for "Dreadnoughts" in May of last year. The contention had been advanced in the House that we had only one dock available in the North Sea, and that a private dock, with only 26½ feet over the sill, and that, since the "Dreadnought" drew two or three feet more water than she was designed to do, she would not be able to use that dock. It was obvious that as this Parliament got older they would never be satisfied with one dock at Rosyth. The demand would be for more, and in fact the scheme provided room for two more docks. It would be advanced that the Germans had seven docks built and building in the North Sea, and one projected, and if it were to be regarded that a dockyard on one side of the North Sea was an answer for a dockyard on the other side, it was certain that people would demand more on our East Coast. He did not agree with that contention, and it had proved to be utterly erroneous strategy. It was the sort of strategy that plunged us into the waste of money at Alderney when Parliament eventually stopped the works. What he contended was that the Government, in listening to their Naval advisers in reference to Rosyth, should not be content with being told that the Rosyth scheme would be useful. They should ask whether it was vital to the safety of the country, and he did not believe any expert could really get up to say that it was. The Civil Lord had not yet told them anything about the alternatives to the Rosyth scheme. He had not told them whether the Admiralty had tried to inquire amongst the shipping ports as to whether they were willing to provide docks if they were subsidised. There was Grimsby, and there was the Thames. If a dock was provided under the President of the Board of Trade's scheme for the Thames, they would obtain a few miles off the resources of the Thames shipbuilding works. The Government were not allowing the Thames works to tender for "Invincibles" and "Dreadnoughts," because there was no dock available on the Thames for ships of that size. Judging by the experience of Colombo, where for a small subsidy of £159,000 they obtained one dock, they ought to be able to obtain the services of four or five private docks round the coast, and three or four at any rate on the East Coast, by the subsidy method for a very small sum as compared with the Rosyth expenditure. That these docks would be catering for the mercantile marine was a positive advantage as it kept them in practice and extended their resources. His next point was that the Civil Lord of the Admiralty had told them nothing about floating docks. He believed one sufficient to accommodate a "Dreadnought" would cost about £200,000, but he did not know, and at any rate it was quite feasible for the Admiralty to station one at Sheerness, and one at Rosyth if they wanted one there, and at the latter place to build engineering workshops on shore, and then the expenditure would be one-seventh or one-eighth of what they proposed to incur now at Rosyth. Finally, there was the alternative of the old Chatham scheme. The late Civil Lord of the Admiralty, the hon. Member for Fareham, wanted to proceed with Chatham as well as Rosyth, he believed.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): A Chatham scheme.

MR. BELLAIRS: Yes. The only argument he had heard advanced against the Chatham scheme of docks was that the river wanted dredging. Finally, he found that four or five miles dredging of the Medway would be sufficient. When he found that the Thames was being dredged to the depth of 31 feet for a distance of twenty-one miles, at a cost of £200,000, and that the Medway had exactly the same nature of bottom and a less distance to carry the mud than in the case of the Thames, he could see no insuperable objection to adopt a scheme for Chatham. He recalled to mind that one of the best First Lords of the Admiralty, Lord Spencer, had said that it would be far better to incur double the expenditure on an old dockyard than to build a new one; and that in the long run, the expenditure would be less owing to the demands for equipment in the new dockyard. That criticism applied to Rosyth. Moreover, the cost of equipment, *personnel*, and forts, inevitably led to a much fuller expenditure beyond the estimates of the engineers. The Admiralty themselves acted on the principle of preferring an old dockyard to a new one, whenever anything happened to a ship abroad. They did so with the "Hood" who lost her rudder near Malta, where there was a very fine dockyard. They sent her home under convoy 2,500 miles for repair past Gibraltar as well as Malta. The "Hibernia" was docked at Gibraltar and was strained in docking because they lacked experience in new dockyards, and so she was brought home afterwards for a thorough overhaul. The "Dominion" was docked at Bermuda, but she was only patched up there, and subsequently brought to Chatham to be thoroughly done up. It was, therefore, perfectly evident that in order to get efficient repairs it was infinitely better to go a considerably greater distance to an old-established dockyard, as compared with a new one. He did not propose to go again into the history of Rosyth, but the hon. Member would admit that the forecast of the Berthing Committee of 1902 were not verified, but absolutely falsified. The terms of reference to the Committee were exceedingly limited. They never investigated the question of the bad administration of dockyards. They had improved the administration considerably of late years. They never investigated as to the number of obsolete ships that were in the dockyards, or the relief that could be afforded by building in the private dockyards. There was quite enough accommodation at Plymouth for shipbuilding to provide sufficient competition to keep down contracting expenses and so Portsmouth could specialise on repair work. The only dock available for the "Dreadnoughts," the two "Lord Nelson's" and the eight "King Edwards" at Portsmouth was occupied by the "Dreadnought" when building for 124 days in 1906. Did that arise from the system or policy? His main point was that the only evidence before the Berthing Committee was that on 31st March, 1900, there was a congested state of the dockyards as regards the berthing of ships. Now the whole of that congestion was gone, and it was only when their forecasts proved utterly erroneous that the strategical argument was invented. Under that argument the assumption was that Rosyth was immediately opposite the German coast. It was at the end of a coast-line, lying at right angles away from the German coast, so that Wilhelmshaven was distant from it 450 miles, as compared with 230 miles to Sheerness, and therefore, a disabled ship running at 10 knots an hour, would find Rosyth eighteen hours steaming further off. The distance to Portsmouth from the German naval port of Wilhelmshaven was exactly the same as to Rosyth. As regarded the strategical argument they would have in the case of Rosyth the main line of communication which presented a great broad front of open sea, whereas in the line for Plymouth, Portsmouth, Chatham, Sheerness, to the south, they had narrow seas, and an easily defended front which would be difficult to break through. Moreover, they had at Rosyth two lines of communication—from the Baltic as well as from Wilhelmshaven—which weakened concentration, and gave less ability to defend the line of communications to the base than was the case on the southern line. The way a line of communication was defended was not by patrolling, but by blockading the enemy's coast; and generally speaking, a line of destroyers would be stretched across the channel, but the blockade in the front of the line of communication at Rosyth would be much wider owing to the greater stretch of open sea. Nobody could doubt that we should have to give as perfect a defence as we could devise to the southern line and all the vast trade to the Thames, and to add a northern line of communication stretching along 450 miles to Wilhelmshaven simply meant dispersion of effort and weakening of forces. His right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean was very fond of referring to mines. There were four elements of luck to a German mining ship in order to drop mines in the tides off Portsmouth, which was his favourite instance. In the first place that ship would have to leave Wilhelmshaven on a dark night; on the second night it would have to break through the Straits of Dover; on the third night it would arrive at Portsmouth, because Portsmouth could not be approached in open day; and the fourth piece of coincident luck was to arrive when the tide suited in order that the mines might drift in with the tide. But if the Admiralty would only allow a sufficient number of cruisers and torpedo craft they would be able to stop these operations of an enemy's fleet. In addition, a great naval Power like ourselves, having full communications, could draw upon all the resources of the country, and it was a far simpler matter for us than for the Russians at Port Arthur to use ordinary trawling vessels to sweep channels clear of mines ahead of our warships. He was not one who believed in nursing a Navy; and most of the brick and mortar projects involved nursing and a provision of things behind the Navy. That was what occurred to the Russians at Port Arthur. He believed that they could demoralise a Navy just as easily by bricks and mortar and by going beyond the necessities of the case as they could demoralise a boy by too much nursing. There was a disease of overcleverness. Why should they try to meet all the possible incidents of a war in advance? Such a policy had lost us many campaigns. The Russian Baltic Fleet was overloaded with coals and stores so as to take them 2,500 miles beyond Vladivostock. The Japanese did the opposite and stripped their ships for the day of battle of all superfluous gear. The result was that the armour belt of the Russian ships was under the water-line and the Japanese easily sunk them. He believed that over-cleverness was at the bottom of the Rosyth scheme, and that we were diverting money essentially required for the Navy to mere bricks and mortar which would avail nothing on the day of battle.

Mr. Bellairs.

*Mr. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) said he would like to support the hon. Gentleman who had demanded fuller information on the subject of Rosyth. He had heard reasons against the Rosyth scheme from a distinguished sailor outside the House similar to those urged by the hon. Member for Lynn Regis, who himself was an expert. He had heard the making use of private dockyards on points on the East Coast advocated as far less costly than building a great dockyard at Rosyth, and he asked why that was an impossible solution of the problem. But apart from all technical arguments, the fact that struck the ordinary layman was that this project was never thought of until the year 1904. ["Oh, yes."] He was not aware that it was ever advocated publicly either inside or outside the House until about the year 1904; and from 1904 to 1908 it had been allowed by successive Governments to remain in a state of suspended animation. Why should the Government have all of a sudden come to the conclusion that it was necessary to build as a matter of urgency this dockyard at Rosyth? He could think of no reason except it were the German scare. If Rosyth was to be taken in the nature of a threat to the German nation, he and his friends would protest against it. If there was any other reason he was sure his right hon. friend would tell them what it was. It had been suggested to them by naval experts, whose opinions were well worth listening to, that in the event of war, if we had a great naval base at Rosyth, the result would be that our Fleet would be divided, and in case of an engagement it would be necessary for the two divisions of the Fleet to unite, and that would not be a good thing in the face of a hostile fleet. He was not, however, competent to judge of these things as an expert, but from the common-sense view there seemed to be something in that. The Government were asking them to embark upon a project which would lead every year to what was called an automatic increase, and his right hon. friend had warned them in almost brutally frank language that they must be prepared next year for a larger Estimate in view of that automatic increase. Therefore, he thought it was desirable that they should be satisfied as to the necessity of this project, and he had ascertained by inquiry himself from many experts that they were by no means convinced upon that point.

*MR. W. PEARCE (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) called attention to the necessity for deep water docks being provided on the Thames near London. The Board of Trade was chiefly concerned with this matter, but he would suggest that the Admiralty should join in order to find a solution of the problem. By general consent it was admitted that they wanted two new large docks on the Thames—one in the neighbourhood of Tilbury, and one nearer London, in the vicinity of the Victoria Docks. If the Thames had docks capable of accommodating large battleships, it would enable the Admiralty to make use of the great resources of the Thames Ironworks Company. This would then give another competitor with regard to shipbuilding. Lately, the Thames Ironworks Company had been precluded from tendering for battleships because there were no docks on the Thames large enough to receive battleships of modern type. He would, however, remind the Admiralty that in the past they had built some of the most famous battleships in the world, including several for the Japanese Navy. He was delighted that the hon. Member for King's Lynn had called attention to this matter, and urged that it should have the attention of the Admiralty.

*MR. NAPIER (Kent, Faversham) said that like his hon. friend the Member for Newbury he did not claim the attention of this House because he knew anything of the matter from the experts' point of view. He rose not for the purpose of criticism, but in order to elicit a little information from the Government. He represented a constituency which bordered the Medway, and they had always wondered why it was necessary to go so far north as Rosyth for the selection of a port of repair for the large new ships. He had little doubt that it was essential that there should be new docks in order to meet the new improvements in construction. He thought everyone was agreed that it was necessary to have docks for vessels of the "Dreadnought" and "Invincible" type, and it occurred to him that Sheerness might possibly be—he did not speak with certainty—a suitable place. As had been pointed out, Sheerness was not only very much nearer the German naval base than Rosyth, but it was well protected by land defences, whereas in the case of Rosyth such defences would have to be constructed. It was generally admitted that the only possible danger to this country was a sudden raid. If that were to happen in the case of Sheerness, the fact that London was within short distance would be an advantage, which in the case of Rosyth was wholly lacking. There were always some 50,000 to 60,000 troops in the neighbourhood of the capital, whilst a regiment or two at the most was all the help Rosyth could look to in an emergency. He was told that it would be quite easy to deepen the channel so as to afford an entrance to Sheerness, and that to do so would not necessitate very extensive dredging. All that was required was to deepen the channel for about two and a half miles by, on an average, five or six feet. He believed that a channel 100 feet wide would probably be sufficient and dock accommodation would no doubt be necessary. If a graving dock were too expensive, probably a floating dock would answer the purpose. It was said that the dock at Rosyth would cost £3,000,000, and he could not think that the cost of deepening the channel of Sheerness to the necessary extent, together with the provision of a new floating dock (which would cost about £200,000) would exceed that sum, whilst it would adequately meet the needs of the situation. He hoped they should have some explanation as to why the Government had considered it necessary to adopt the Rosyth—and he was sure the more expensive—scheme.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): I need scarcely say that I do not rise to support the observations made by previous speakers. I entirely dissent on this occasion from the views expressed by the hon. Member for King's Lynn, and I have no desire and no expectation like that entertained by the last two speakers who have taken part in the debate, that if a dock is to be built I can get that dock in my own constituency.

MR. MACKARNESS: I have no site for a dock in my constituency.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member is not one of the last two speakers.

MR. W. PEARCE: The dock which I pressed was not in my constituency.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: It is not in the hon. Member's immediate neighbourhood, but it is in what I may call his sphere of influence.

MR. W. PEARCE: My hope in intervening was that of getting some advantage for the whole of London, which I think is often neglected by this House.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I suppose not excluding Limehouse. But we need not waste time about that. My view, of course, is the direct opposite to that of the hon. Member for King's Lynn. I believe that the creation of this establishment, at least the minimum establishment contemplated by the Government, at Rosyth to be a matter of the most urgent public importance. I think that there has been much too great a delay about it already, and my one desire is that now that they have decided to carry it out the work shall be executed as expeditiously as possible. I made a suggestion to the hon. Gentleman when the Vote was under discussion before, that in calling for tenders for the execution of the work the Admiralty should indicate to the contractors that they would take into consideration, not merely the amount of the tender, but the time within which the contractor would undertake to complete the work, and the hon. Gentleman was good enough to say that he would bring that suggestion before his colleagues on the Board of Admiralty, and I hope that he will be able to give us an exact account of the Admiralty's intentions when he speaks to-day. My reason for pressing this is, in the first place, that I believe this work to be one of peculiar urgency, and that we may have great need for this dock before, under any circumstances, it can now be completed. But even apart from that, it is of course obvious that when you are expending great capital sums like this it is more economical to proceed expeditiously than to dawdle over the work. The moment you begin to spend, your money is standing at a loss until you have the use of the work, and, therefore, the quicker you can complete the works the sooner you have the use of your money, and the more economical is the use of your expenditure. I am aware of what happened in another place yesterday. It was there stated that it is impossible for the Admiralty to spend more money or to make more progress than they have allowed for in the Estimates within the next financial year, because, it was stated, the Director of Works and his staff could not, until September, finish the plans which were necessary. I should like to inquire what exactly the meaning of that is. Does the making of the plans there alluded to mean the getting out of the quantities or not, because if you have only the plans finished by September then you have to get out the quantities. I am afraid the work will not be done till this next financial year, and I should very much hope that the work will be let out to tender in September at the very latest. I cannot set myself against the opinion of the present Director of Works as to the time that it will take him to complete his preparations. I know he is an admirable and indefatigable officer, and if he has the directions of the Admiralty he will proceed with all rapidity. But if that is so I regret the more the time that has been allowed to pass without this necessary preliminary having been carried out, and how much we have wasted during the last two years whilst the Government has been chewing the cud of this question over and over again. Now I come to the question of expediting the work, when you actually come to tendering and letting the contract. The other day it was stated in another place by the First Lord of the Admiralty that he hoped to get the work done in seven years—

> "I believe, I hope, we shall be able to do the work, not in ten years, but in seven years. I want to make it quite clear that the small sum put down for Rosyth this year does not indicate any slackness on the part of the Admiralty in pushing the work forward. The Director of Works at the Admiralty has informed me that it will take the whole of his staff until September, working overtime, to finish the plans which are necessary. I am also advised that under the contract itself a clause which would suggest a higher rate of tender if the work is completed in a short time is not a desirable condition. We think a better plan is one I propose to adopt. I am going to propose that a bonus shall be given to the contractor who takes the work if he completes it within the time he tenders for. Something of this character I am advised is a better plan than the other."

Now I confess I do not understand what that means. What is the time which he will tender for? Is it the time named by the Government or will the contractors be allowed to say what is the earliest time in which they will be able to compete? I should hope the latter. I cannot see why that should not be. The practice in great industrial undertakings is to proceed in that way. In the case of a railway, for instance, where the company desire to earn dividends at the earliest possible moment or where the execution of the work interferes with the working of the line, it is a common thing to call attention to the fact that contractors who offer to do the work expeditiously will be favourably considered. If the Government are not going to do that, then I want to know what time the Government are going to indicate, and if it is to be as Lord Tweedmouth stated, seven years, does that mean for the completion of the whole of the work or only the completion of the dock and basin, so far as and in such a manner as to enable the Admiralty to use them in time of emergency. If it is for the completion of the whole work it is a very reasonable time, but if it means that the dock and basin will not be available for the use of the Admiralty until seven years are gone, then I cannot conceive why that should be so, except that there is a desire to spread the Estimate over a longer period.

*THE CIVIL LORD TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. LAMBERT, Devonshire South Molton): The right hon. Gentleman asked, and I think quite legitimately, that we should expedite the work at Rosyth as much as possible, and with that I quite agree. He then asked whether we would give the contractors who would undertake to complete it in the shortest period of time, preference. We have carefully considered that question. I promised the other day to bring it before my colleagues and the result of my doing so is shown in the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty in another place yesterday. We were advised that to give preference to any contractor who promised to complete the work expeditiously would not be advisable, but that a reasonable time should be fixed by the Admiralty for the completion of the work, that the contractor should be penalised for all the time he took beyond that period to complete, but that if he completed before the time he should receive a bonus. I cannot promise that that will be done, but that is what we have in our minds. I hope the House will not bind me to that statement, because, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, it is desirable in these matters to keep the Government in a safe position. We believe that it is not an unreasonable condition that the works themselves should be completed in seven years, but I do not include in that the necessary workshops which will probably take a year longer or perhaps a year and-a-half. I think the right hon. Gentleman was a little harsh on the Admiralty when he complained that they had wasted time. I can assure him that the careful preliminary preparations that have gone on will, in the long run, save both time and money. Rosyth is of rather a peculiar formation. At one point you have rocks, and close to them you have 60 or 70 feet of mud. It has been used as an argument against Rosyth as a Naval base. But the Admiralty do not propose to build their lock and docks on the places where there is this 60 or 70 feet of mud, and the project could not have been carried out economically but for the preliminary borings. I am informed that some docks have had to have 15 or 16 feet of concrete on the bottom, but we do not think that will be necessary in this case, because the situation for the docks has been chosen where the rocks jut out and there will only be about 2½ feet of granolithic concrete required on the bottom. We hope the contract particulars will be got out about the time the right hon. Gentleman suggests.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: May I ask the hon. Gentleman one question before he passes away from this point? I presume that the Admiralty will consider the time not only for the completion of the whole, but for each item.

*MR. LAMBERT: It will be one contract, but I will bear that suggestion in mind. The hon. Member for King's Lynn went into the question of whether Rosyth was necessary for a naval base or not. Surely it is a little late in the day now to argue that question. But I think if hon. Members really look into the matter, and see how few docks we have on the East Coast they will recognise that it is necessary to provide some place at all events to accommodate these large ships of war. The hon. Member tells us we might with greater advantage have floating docks. Floating docks are all very well in places where there are no tides. But if there are tides the docks are apt to float with the tides. Moreover floating docks cannot be moored at sea; they must be in a basin somewhere. There was a suggestion that there should be a large scheme at Chatham or Sheerness as an alternative to Rosyth, but we have found that the cost of dredging necessary to convert Chatham into a naval base for these big ships would be prohibitive. Although we can dredge the Channel to the necessary depth the moment dredging takes place the mud silts in from the sides so that there would have to be continuous dredging. At Sheerness we are dredging to the depth of 26 feet at low water to enable ships of the "Dreadnought" class to get in and out at certain states of the tide. Then there is the question of subsidising private docks. The Admiralty would be glad to see built on the East Coast by private enterprise docks which would accommodate these big ships, but I would point out that a private dock has not the same advantages as a Government dock for battleships. It is in the first place built for commercial purposes and is not equipped in the same way. A battleship might require to have a new section of armour plate put in, and there are none of the appliances in a private dock necessary for such a purpose. More than that, it is in the time of peace that docks are wanted as well as in time of war, and if in a private dock you have a private ship it would be a difficult thing to say that the ship must come out in order that a battleship should go in. Of course that could be done in time of war, but not in time of peace. I have been informed that after careful investigation it has been decided that this policy of subsidising private docks would not be satisfactory because in the first place we could not have the first use of the docks and they have not the necessary appliances; and, secondly, we should have to pay large subsidies towards the building of these docks and probably large annual subsidies in addition for their use. There is another matter about private docks, that they have only about 20 feet 6 inches on the dock sill, while the dock and lock at Rosyth will have about 36 feet minimum. My hon. friend will see that these new Rosyth docks in times of emergency will accommodate ships of the new type which require more water than is available in a private dock.

MR. W. PEARCE pointed out that it was proposed to spend two to three millions at once on deep water docks, and asked whether anything could be done by the Admiralty joining with the Board of Trade in considering the provision of deep water docks on the Thames.

MR. MACKARNESS was understood to ask whether there was any urgency for this year.

*MR. LAMBERT: We have been getting the plans ready, and we are prepared to go on. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer complains that we have not gone on fast enough, and I think I must leave the two critics to answer one another. As regards the question of my hon. friend the Member for Limehouse, I am not very well acquainted with the question of the Port of London, but my right hon. friend is on the Committee which is dealing with this very point, and I am sure that if the Admiralty by any means in their power can get more dock accommodation in the neighbourhood of the East Coast, they will certainly bear in mind my hon. friend's suggestion. I confess I am not conversant with the question of the Port of London, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the suggestion made here this afternoon will be very sympathetically considered by the Admiralty having regard to the various interests concerned.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): The Civil Lord has dealt with the subject of Rosyth, but he made no reference to a work of almost equal importance and certainly equal urgency, and that is the new lock at Portsmouth. He has told us that special arrangements will be made under the contract for Rosyth by which to effect the completion of the work in the shortest possible time. The principle, not by any means a new one, is to be followed of offering bonuses to the contractors in the event of the time assigned by the Admiralty being shortened, and inflicting fines where it is exceeded. What I wish to ask is whether a similar practice will be followed in the case of Portsmouth lock. It is unnecessary to detain the House by again urging the immense importance of this work. The fact is that the only available dock for the "Dreadnought" is practically unapproachable at the present time, and will be until the new locks are completed. I venture to express the hope that the Admiralty will adopt the same policy with regard to the work at Portsmouth which they have adopted in reference to Rosyth. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will tell us whether that is the case; and whether he can give any answer to the question which I addressed to him on a previous occasion with regard to the two other docks at Rosyth which are marked out in the plans which he has placed in the Tea Room? I think it must be obvious to anyone who has studied this problem of docking, that long before the Rosyth works which are now sanctioned have been completed three extra docks will be a necessity. I asked the hon. Gentleman on a previous occasion whether he would not represent that matter to the Admiralty, in view of the fact that it is enormously cheaper to build docks all at one time rather than spread them over several contracts, or delay and hamper the use of the new docks while further docks are being built. I should like an answer to that point, and I certainly hope the Government will turn a deaf ear to the criticism of the hon. Member for Newbury, that there is no special urgency for this year. There is not only special urgency for this year, but there was special urgency for last year and the year before. The reason for urgency is that the present Government, of which the hon. Member is a supporter, has decided to maintain in the North Sea a fleet of ships of the "Dreadnought" class. There is no docking accommodation for that fleet, and docking accommodation must be provided, in view of the fact that it takes quite as long to build a dock as to build a battleship. The fact that the Government has already decided to build those big ships makes the matter one of the utmost urgency. I think the urgency comes to be apparent to everyone, and I hope the Admiralty will not be in the least deflected from their decision, but will proceed even now, at the eleventh hour, with all due speed, disregarding any representations of the hon. Member opposite.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said, in reference to the answer given by the Civil Lord of the Admiralty as to dock accommodation and the Admiralty's acting in conjunction with the Board of Trade, that the fact of the hon. Gentlemen's not fully understanding the question of the Port of London was a very good reason for further delay in proceeding with this matter, because it was one of the vexed questions whether the Thames or the Forth was to be our great naval base. The Thames had been our chief naval base. Now it was proposed to remove it right away to the Forth. Surely one of the principal elements in that decision was the suitability of the Thames for deep-water docks. The Civil Lord said he really had not considered that question, and did not understand it. When a man of his great capacity, with his knowledge and experience of the work of the Admiralty, said he did not fully understand all the work that would have to be done in the Thames in connection with this matter, then it was safe to say that nobody else did—that it was a matter still to be thoroughly studied, and one still subject to proper inquiry. He certainly thought, in these circumstances, that to proceed with the construction of a new naval base, before the suitability of the Thames had been thoroughly threshed out, would be taking a leap in the dark. He hoped that the Admiralty for another year or two would pursue the policy of reflection and consideration—that they would chew the cud, as an hon. Member had remarked, of wise and sober reflections for a year or so longer. The urgency of this change of base to the River Forth was not so great as it appeared. It was quite true that the right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench had given the Government the very friendly and patriotic advice to push on with this expenditure; but he could not help seeing that hon. Gentlemen opposite were exceedingly anxious, as far as possible, that this expenditure should be completed by this Government, so that they themselves, if they came into office, would not have to find the money. Hon. Gentlemen opposite thought it better that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer should find the money for this great expenditure, and that they should be relieved from finding several millions to deal with Rosyth. They would then be able to show the country how much better financiers they were than the present Government, and how they were able to avoid taxation. If the Government followed the advice of hon. Gentlemen opposite the expenditure would increase to probably £5,000,000. They had far better take advice from their own supporters, from those who would and could keep them in office for a very long time if they chose, than from gentlemen opposite who would turn them out at the first opportunity. It was proposed to place these new docks where there was alternating mud and rock. He had himself had some experience of mud and of rock. He could build on mud, and he could build on rock, but he could not build on half mud and half rock, and the man who tried to do so would find that his building would come to grief. He thought the contractor would be very careful, if he was to be put under penalties and a time limit, to include in his contract a great many provisions for extras in case of the foundations subsiding, and he had to carry out the drawings submitted to him. This was a very small sum of £30,000, and if it were only that perhaps it would not be worth while to say 30,000 words about it. But if they let the contract and if they followed the advice of the Front Opposition Bench, they would stand committed to an expenditure of £3,000,000. He made the practical suggestion that they should not let the contract at all, but that the Admiralty should proceed with the work in the same way as works were proceeded with by the County Council in London, namely, under an official who would employ men and buy material as it was wanted. If difficulties arose when the work was started in the northern river they could stop it, and, with a little reflection, find whether the money could not be spent in other ways. They should not be in a hurry. If once they let the contract they would be in for it, and they would be actually voting £3,000,000, which he ventured to think would be a great misfortune. Perhaps they would get a white elephant, or worse than a white elephant. The hon. Member for Fareham had said the other day that there was to be a great dock at Rosyth, and one of the advantages of the situation was that it was not so far from Glasgow, and that it could be connected with that city by canal. Everybody who had heard anything of engineering had heard of a ship canal between the Forth and the Clyde all his life. It was a very ancient project, hardly revived but to be dismissed because of the immense cost. Anyone who knew the ground was aware that they had to cut through a level very nearly 160 feet above the sea. There were two types of canal, one with locks and the other on the sea level. The latter was the only suitable kind of canal to let the British Navy through—big ships and little ships. He did not think a lock canal would be a good thing.

How much less than £100,000,000 would a canal from Grangemouth to Glasgow cost? Rather than spend that in order to have the canal for possible problematic use at some future date would it not be better to have the interest on the money —say, £4,000,000 a year—spent on the Navy? They might dismiss that ship canal. The Royal Commission had a scheme for a lock canal, but it was only for merchant ships. If they had a lock canal to take "Dreadnoughts," the cost would approach £50,000,000. The Manchester Ship Canal was no longer, if as long, and had no great works, and yet it had cost nearly £25,000,000. If Rosyth was selected because it was a suitable place for connecting by canal with Glasgow, let the House pause before it entered on a scheme which was certain to cost before it was finished, £100,000,000. He thought he had suggested reasons why the First Lord of the Admiralty should pause before he took a step on the road to ruin. Surely on the East Coast facilities could be got at a much cheaper price than they were now proposing. The Great Central Railway Company were building a great dock at Grimsby. Had the Admiralty approached them and considered what the extra cost would be of making that dock suitable for "Dreadnoughts" and putting in one or two graving docks? They would find it very much cheaper than going up to the Forth. Then there was the Tyne. He understood there was a dock in the Tyne that would take a "Dreadnought." The object of special dock accommodation was to get a dock which would take a ship at all stages of the tide. Was it absolutely essential to spend all this money to get in ships at all stages of the tide? The only objection to Sheerness and the Medway was that ships could only be got in at a certain state of the tide. Quite apart from expense it would be a strategical mistake to move our Naval base from Chatham to Rosyth. London was really the heart of the Empire. So long as London was safe the country and the Empire were safe. They were going to move the Naval base away from London and close the establishments at Chatham and Sheerness—they were not going to keep establishments idle at great expense—for London was going to be protected from Rosyth. London could be as well protected from Portsmouth as from Rosyth. They had to consider the moral effect on the nation. All these preparations were for the supremely unlikely event, which he believed would never occur, of some nation in the North Sea wishing to attack us. They were going to sail down and shell the City of London, and it would be said they could not do that because there was a Fleet 500 miles away in Rosyth. Would that calm the public mind, or would the First Lord immediately telegraph to Rosyth to send the Fleet to the Thames because London was in a funk? London would naturally be in a funk if the great Fleet, for which it had paid so many millions, was not there. What would happen would be that the Fleet would be divided, just as in the Russo-Japanese War the Russian Fleet was destroyed because it was in four parts, one at Vladivostock, one at Port Arthur, one in the Black Sea, and the other at St. Petersburg. The Japanese Fleet destroyed them all in detail, one by one, though it was inferior to the whole Russian Navy if concentrated in one Fleet. That was very likely what would happen to us if a great part of our Fleet was moved away from Rosyth. A powerful, fierce, and clever foe, with the biggest ships and guns and the best men, would sail for the Forth and find our Fleet at Rosyth. It must either keep under the guns of the forts or go out and fight, and then it would meet the whole of the enemy's fleet in the Forth and, as the part was less than the whole, so our Fleet would be destroyed by this enormous German Fleet which was going to crush us, because the greater part of our Fleet was in the Thames, or at Portsmouth, or Plymouth, or in the Mediterranean or the Irish Channel. It seemed to him that they were just paving the way for destruction. Let them take the alternative and suppose the biggest part of the Fleet was at Rosyth and the rest at the Nore. Down came the German Fleet to attack us at the entrance of the Thames. He took it they would go out to fight. We had not learnt the lesson of cowardice yet. When they went out they would find the whole German Fleet coming upon them. Could anything be more absurd or a more reckless waste of money than this partition of the Fleet by building a new base at Rosyth? He had listened with such ears as he possessed, but had found no argument in favour of this change of base. The only argument was that we were going to have more "Dreadnoughts" than docks, but that was no reason for changing the base. He had heard the suggestion from the Civil Lord that there was some difficulty in dredging the Medway. Was that all? He most solemnly and sincerely advised the Government as one of their friends, not one of those who wished to see them done for and ruined and turned out of office because they were extravagant when they had said they would be economical, to reconsider their decision. It was said that the Scottish came down south and got most of the good things, and now they were going to get the naval base. With regard to the dredging of the Medway, they might get reports and estimates from engineering firms, as to whether the running in of the sides of the dredged channel could be averted by making the slopes of the dredged channel a little more gentle. He did not pretend to possess the knowledge of an engineer who had specially studied the bearings of the question, and it might be that the right hon. Gentleman had other information on the subject, but he had looked at the map, and the appearance on the map was of a wide waterway where it would be possible to get a gradual slope, and they all knew that there was an angle at which most sorts of mud would not run. If they could dredge the channel they would save many millions of money by utilising the old docks and the old establishments, and what he thought was more important still, they would keep our forces more concentrated. They did not know that it was Germany—it might be France or a combination of Mediterranean Powers with France, that was going to attack us. How did they know? Yet they were going to send the Fleet right away to Rosyth to resist an invasion that might come from France. They knew very well that Germany had never attacked us. We had never been at war with Germany. She had always been our ally. He himself, although for the sake of argument he had adopted the hypothesis of a mighty German fleet, did not believe in its existence either now or in ten years time. We wished to be friends with France, but we had not always been so, unfortunately, and we were far more likely to come into collision with France than with Germany. But it was proposed to establish a naval base at Rosyth, far away from the South Coast, because certain newspaper writers had tried to get up a scare. Let this expense be incurred, if at all, by people who honestly and sincerely believed, as Gentlemen opposite did, that the scheme was necessary for the Navy. Ministers, whilst they were going to do it, were doing it in a sort of half-hearted way. They thought it was a thing that had to be done, but were very sorry for it, and did not quite like it. But Gentlemen opposite would do it gaily and gladly. The more millions they spent the more they would be pleased, while the more the present Government spent, the worse their supporters would be pleased. He asked them, before they abandoned the Thames and the Medway, to let their supporters have the advantage of seeing some Reports on the question, by which they might know whether it was true or not—he had been told it was not true — that there was difficulty in making good waterways, and deep water docks, at all states of the tide. He earnestly hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not let the contract for Rosyth, but would hold his hand and obtain reports from civil engineers, and consider whether it was safe or not to divide the Fleet, because that could only be done on the hypothesis that we had a superabundant strength —more than enough for any reasonable purpose. If we had such superabundant strength, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman, before starting on Rosyth would alter his shipbuilding programme and reduce his other expenses to some reasonable limit. It had been said that Rosyth was adopted as a base for strategical reasons. How could they formulate a plan of strategy before they knew their enemy? He asked the right hon. Gentleman to hold his hand at least for another year. If the Opposition next year abused him, he did not need to trouble, because they would abuse him whatever he did.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he hoped the advice which had been given by the hon. Member for Sleaford would not carry weight on the Ministerial side of the House. It might be possible to save a million or two for some years by the postponement of these works, but that policy would be accompanied by a growing public danger. Not only expert opinion, but the country at large, had determined that a strategical port in the North Sea was necessary, and ought to be constructed without any undue delay. He was glad to hear that the time fixed for the execution of the works at Rosyth had been expedited, and that they were likely to be completed in seven years instead of ten. There was no part of Admiralty policy which required to be pushed forward so much as the completion of this undertaking at Rosyth. If London or the Empire was to be defended from the North Sea, it could only be done with a naval base on the East Coast. He cared very little where the site was, but it had now been settled and he hoped no further delay would arise in the carrying out of the works. In the past, investigations had been carried out at Rosyth in a somewhat leisurely fashion, but he understood that they had now been concluded. He felt sure that the Admiralty had been well advised in securing that the work should not be begun except under the most favourable conditions.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said the hon. Member for Sleaford had stated the Government had been extravagant, although they promised to be economical, and he quite agreed with him. The hon. Member had also advised the Admiralty to follow the example of the Works Department of the London County Council, and send down a certain number of men headed by an officer, who should buy materials and employ men, and after enough money had been spent the men were to do nothing.

MR. LUPTON said he did not say they were to do nothing. What he said was that they should be set upon other work.

SIR F. BANBURY asked where would the other work be found? He had listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for King's Lynn, who had stated that in his opinion it was a mistake to spend money upon fortifications because the money would be better spent upon ships. He believed, however, that the balance of opinion was that these dockyards were necessary, and that they should be completed as soon as possible. To buy a site, spend money upon it, and then stop, could only result in obtaining no advantage for the money spent. That was a most uneconomical proceeding. He hoped matters would be so arranged that instead of taking seven years, the docks would be finished in four years. The remarks made by the hon. Member for Limehouse about London and the Thames appeared to have been misunderstood. His hon. friend was not suggesting large docks that would take a "Dreadnought," but merely advocating that certain work should be given to the Thames Shipbuilding Company, and that had nothing whatever to do with the completion of the work at Rosyth. He wished to ask whether the Government could give to the House any information about the docks at Gibraltar. Not many years ago, they used to have interesting discussions upon those docks, and the predecessor of the hon. Member for King's Lynn used to speak by the hour on them. They had heard nothing about them in this debate, and although Gibraltar appeared in the Estimates, nothing like full information was given. He would like to know whether those works had fulfilled the expectations of the Admiralty. He understood from what the hon. Member for King's Lynn said, that repairs could not be done at either Gibraltar or Malta.

MR. BELLAIRS: Large repairs.

SIR F. BANBURY said it seemed to him that the money which had been spent at Gibraltar had been wasted if the ships had to be brought home for large repairs. The idea of a dock at Malta was that it should be capable of taking the largest vessels, and he would like to hear from the Admiralty what answer they had to give to the criticisms of the hon. Member for King's Lynn upon this point.

*Mr. LAMBERT: I assume that the hon. Baronet opposite refers to the Loan works at Gibraltar. All that has been completed and there are only in this Vote small items such as dredging. There are two docks at Gibraltar capable of taking a vessel of the "Dreadnought" type. I understand that the point raised by the hon. Member for Limehouse was not an alternative to Rosyth, but something additional. I can promise him that his point will have the consideration of the Admiralty. As an alternative to Rosyth, what he suggested is impossible, because we could not get up the Thames. The hon. Member for Fareham asked me if the new lock at Portsmouth could be expedited. I can assure him that we realise very deeply the inconvenience that will be caused at Portsmouth while this lock is being made, and we shall take every means in our power to expedite the work. I may say that it is to the contractors' benefit to finish the work as soon as possible, because the Admiralty only pay for work completed. With regard to additional docks at Rosyth, we are now considering whether it is wise to put into the main contract a provision asking for alternative tenders, so that if required those docks could be carried out by the same contractor. I have been asked whether double docks long enough for two "Dreadnoughts" can be made at Rosyth. I am told that such a dock would necessitate having an entrance at both ends and that is impossible at Rosyth. Otherwise you have to take out the ship nearest the basin before the ship inside can be taken out. That might lead to considerable delay, and I am informed that this practice has not been adopted except in the case of very small ships. It is essential, if you put two ships in one dock, that you should have an entrance at both ends so that the ship which is ready should be able to come out at once. I would ask the House to let us have this Vote now.

Question put, and agreed to.

Sir F. Banbury.

SUPPLY [11th March] REPORT.

Resolution reported;

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 185,000, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding His Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. LUTTRELL (Devonshire, Tavistock) said he would move to reduce the Vote by 10,000 men and thus afford an opportunity for speaking to those hon. Members who were not able to speak last week in Committee, amongst the number being no less a personage than the Secretary of State for War. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give a satisfactory answer on this subject. He himself, and others, felt that the Army was in excess of our requirements. If it were necessary to have an Army able to attack foreign countries it might be any size, but if it was only to be a defensive Army, it was far too large. Last week he had compared our Army of to-day with that of 1895–6 when we had not begun to make preparations for the war in South Africa. The Army in 1895 was looked upon as adequate for the defensive purposes of the Empire, and he could not imagine why a like force was not adequate now. He found that since the year 1895–6 there had been an increase of no fewer than 14,000 men in the Home Army. In 1895–6 the Home Army consisted of 116,153, and now it consisted of 130,148. That was an immense increase, and many hon. Members did not see any reason for it. We were to have a striking force of 160,000 men. He and his friends could not see what justification there was for putting the country to the expense of keeping such a large expeditionary force. The Secretary of State for War had stated that in these questions he was dependent upon the policy of the Government. The policy of the Government was a policy of peace. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, and he thought he might say the

Secretary of State for India, judging from the speeches they had made, would all be in favour of a smaller expeditionary force than we had now. It was well know that the Prime Minister over and over again before the General Election made statements accusing the Conservative Government of putting the country to great expense. He could give several quotations from the right hon. Gentleman's speeches to that effect. The Foreign Secretary, speaking five years ago, laid it down that an expeditionary force of 80,000 would, in his opinion, be sufficient; he even went so far as to say that 40,000 would be sufficient. The Foreign Secretary was largely responsible for the foreign policy of the country. What had taken place in these five years to make it necessary to keep more than double the force which the right hon. Gentleman then thought would be sufficient? The Secretary of State for War might say that, although we had this force, it was not in reality one which was putting the country to any great expense, because under the Cardwell system if we had troops abroad we should have the same number at home. Why was it necessary to keep so many troops abroad? The right hon. Gentleman was bringing back from South Africa four battalions of infantry and one regiment of cavalry, and we should then have seventy-four battalions at home and seventy-four battalions abroad. He and his friends contended that seventy-four battalions abroad was too great a number. If we did not require them abroad, then we did not require a like number at home. The increase abroad as well as at home had been considerable. In 1895–6 there were in Africa, 4,888 men, not counting temporary contingents of 1,066 men in West Africa; to-day there were 20,173. He could not see why there should have been such an immense increase. It might be said that immediately before or after the Boer War such a force was necessary, but now that the people were settled there the taxpayers ought not to be put to the great expense involved. The bringing home of four battalions of infantry and one regiment of cavalry would only be a small saving. If we were keeping an excessive number of men in South Africa it was wasteful extravagance. In Asia, exclusive of India, we had in 1895–6 6,300 men; to-day we had 9,735, an increase of 3,405. In the Mediterranean the number had decreased from 14,451 to 11,479, but in Egypt the number had increased from 4,267 to 5,771, an increase of 1,504. He thought we were keeping too many men in India. If during the Boer War we could protect India with 63,000, why not now? If ever there was a dangerous time in India it was then. Our Army in India was not used for aggressive purposes. The words of the Secretary of State for War bore out that proposition. The right hon. Gentleman said the other day that the British Army in India was not an Army for aggressive purposes, but only for the purpose of maintaining internal order. What was the use of spending money in India on education and in improving railway communication, if we had to keep the people down with a larger number of troops than before? Our policy in India should have the effect of enabling us to reduce rather than increase the force. There had been an increase in India since 1895–6 from 73,168 to 76,155. Since 1895–6 there had been an increase in all of 29,466 men. He thought he was making a very moderate request when he asked the Government to knock off 10,000 men. He begged to move.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) who was indistinctly heard seconded the Amendment. He said he fully recognised that we ought to have a strong Navy because it was our all in all. The cost of the Navy was necessarily very considerable, but he thought we could hardly afford to have an overwhelming Army and an expensive Navy. He had no doubt that after a few years the Navy Estimates would be over £50,000,000. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he had ever seriously considered the question of solving the difficulty by reviving the long service system? He hoped the right hon. Gentleman had an altogether open mind and would approach the problem as it really existed, and not with the eyes of people who had grown up under different circumstances than now existed A different system existed in Europe now as compared with years ago. The situation in India had changed. There were railways all over that great continent now and stations where white men could live, and even in Beloochistan Colonies might be founded. He, therefore, could not see in the least why they should not go back to the old system and allow India to look after her own Army, to recruit her own Army, and to maintain and pay for it. The problem would be extremely simple, and they would be able to cut down the Army to a small highly-trained force which, with the Volunteers, would be sufficient to defend this country. In that way a saving of £13,000,000 or £14,000,000 might be effected. They would then be able to introduce such economies as would enable the Government to carry out those social reforms which were always dangled before the people but never carried out for want of money.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out '185,000,' and insert '175,000,'—(*Mr. Luttrell*)—instead of."

Question proposed, "That '185,000' stand part of the said Resolution."

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I do not rise to support the Motion proposed by the hon. Member for Tavistock, and seconded by the hon. Member for Hackney. Their desire is to reduce the strength of the Regular Army; I desire to prevent its being reduced. I believe that reduction has already gone too far. The hon. Member for Hackney says that we are being bled white by the expenditure on our defence forces, but I ask him what colour we would be bled if ever our country were successfully invaded, and we had not sufficient defences by sea and land to resist such an invasion.

MR. HART-DAVIES: I said nothing about the Navy.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: I know that the Navy is not on this Vote, and that it would not be in order to refer to it on this occasion. Therefore, I turn to other matters more strictly relevant to the Vote now under discussion. I wish to address my remarks almost entirely to the question of artillery, and to deal with the contemplated reduction of the artillery of the Regular Army, and to the effect that would have on our whole war efficiency. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that whilst he has not yet carried out the proposed reduction of the Royal Field Artillery by 2,400 men, he intended to reduce it by that number as soon as their places could be taken by the Special Reserve. He is going to take thirty-three batteries of the Royal Field Artillery and reduce them to a two-gun basis; that is, he is going largely to deplete their ranks, by something like seventy men per battery. These batteries are then to be used for training depots and the places of the disbanded men are to be filled temporarily by Special Reservists, who are to be taken at the age of seventeen, and who may or may not have done six months service in those instructional batteries. What will be the effect of this proposal on our available artillery forces at home? We shall have left, apart from the artillery of the Territorial Force and of the expeditionary force, only forty-one batteries of Regular artillery. Eight of these batteries will be horse batteries, and these the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to touch. But the remaining thirty-three batteries he is going to eviscerate in such a manner that their efficiency for the purposes of any serious warfare will be reduced to a vanishing point. His intention is to reduce those batteries to a two-gun basis, with only one-third or one-quarter of Regular troops. The Under-Secretary for War in another place last year gave an undertaking that—

"We shall not reduce any Regular artillery before we have an adequate number of Special Reservists to take their place."

He added this year—

"We are living up to that undertaking."

But whilst these 2,400 men have not yet been actually disbanded they are under suspended sentence of dismissal. But whether the right hon. Gentleman's plan is good or not, I say that these batteries can never be regarded as efficient by filling them up with lads of seventeen years of age and of no training. The right hon. Gentleman is merely wrecking the efficiency of the batteries by attempting to carry out any such proposal. A very interesting speech was made two days ago by Lord Wynford, who had served in the Regular Artillery, and, therefore, had had practical experience, in the course of which his Lordship pointed out that four or five untrained men in a battery of artillery could not do the work of one trained man. So far as fighting efficiency is concerned the one man could not be replaced by a large number of men who did not know their duties. Therefore, I urge on the House that if the right hon. Gentleman decides on this plan of filling up the sixty-six batteries that are to form part of his expeditionary force, with these Special Reservists, well and good. He will have strengthened the available artillery for his expeditionary force if necessity arises; but as regards the batteries left behind which are to form the backbone of the defence of this country, let him retain the 2,400 trained men whom he proposes to get rid of, and divide them up amongst the instructional batteries so as to give them a more adequate stiffening of Regular gunners. Further, as a result of that, let him raise the peace establishment of the thirty-three home batteries to four guns each. If these batteries are raised to that strength and the proportion of Regular gunners is increased, I believe that, while not nearly as efficient as Regular batteries, they will be readily capable of being brought up to full strength and of becoming efficient fighting machines. I am not giving my own opinion merely. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War is aware of the advice which has been given by our greatest living soldier, who himself is an artilleryman and who has given the whole of his adult life to the study of war. The right hon. Gentleman smiles at Lord Roberts, but after all we attach more importance to the opinions of Lord Roberts than to the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman on military matters. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will not belittle the experience of the gallant Field-Marshal, or, as did one of his supporters, the other day, impute to the gallant Field-Marshal any unworthy motive, political or otherwise. Lord Roberts said that to eviscerate these thirty-three batteries in the manner proposed "was an extraordinary waste of good material" and he urged very strongly that the whole of the thirty-three batteries and the eight Horse Artillery batteries should be kept on a reduced peace footing, perhaps, but as Regular and efficient batteries to be used in the event of an invasion. I suppose it is useless to urge on the right hon. Gentleman to take thought again, because he told us that he was determined to go on with this scheme, which, I believe can only lead to disaster. But that after all is his affair. We believe, and I speak for all artillery officers whom I have been able to consult, that more Regular artillery is absolutely essential. We believe that the Austrians have, after all, got the right idea in this matter. I understand that in Austria, after careful consideration it has been decided that it is necessary to give nothing but Regular artillery to the second line Army. I believe that is a perfectly sound idea, and I think that although you can raise a home defence Army of both infantry and yeomanry with a small amount of training, you can never raise an effective artillery force by this method. Really when the right hon. Gentleman tells us—and this is the only reason he has put forward so far—that unless you do what he proposes you will create great discouragement in the ranks of the Territorial Force—in other words that this force will not consent to play at all unless they have a full box of toys, I think he is doing an injustice to the Territorial Army. The right hon. Gentleman himself in a very wise speech which he made some time ago before he committed himself to this scheme said:

> "We must have more artillery and nothing short of the best will do."

That is what he preached, but it is not what he practises, and we would forgive him if he would only adapt his practice to his preaching and follow the policy of foreign nations who have far greater experience than we have in this matter. The right hon. Gentleman's remark is corroborated almost verbally by Lord Roberts, who said the other day in the House of Lords, that if we are not to have the best artillery it would be infinitely better to have no artillery at all. I know it is now the fashion in this House to belittle expert advice. It is only necessary to say what the expert thinks is right in order to secure the ridicule of the right hon. Gentleman's supporters, but after all in a matter which is highly technical, such as this affecting the artillery, I think we are entitled to give more weight to the opinion of experts than the Party opposite are accustomed to do. What I ask the right hon. Gentleman is, and I hope that he will answer me because he has not done so yet, whether he can now relieve our minds a little by giving us the opinions of any eminent or practical soldiers who have seen war service, who are in favour of his proposal to reduce the regular artillery and put in its place untrained artillery. I think the right hon. Gentleman should tell us a little more in favour of that proposal than is contained in his own approval. We cannot attach much importance to the statement that the Army Council is in its favour. We all know that the Army Council has varied its opinions very much in the last few years, and we are entitled to know who are the artillery authorities who have given him the advice which has induced him to press forward this matter. I may say that the only military authority that I have heard supporting it has been the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division. He is the only military authority in politics or out of politics that I have been able to meet who has given his approval to the right hon. Gentleman's plan. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman will be able to give other authorities, but he has not done so yet and I hope he will be able to enlighten us this afternoon. There is another point which I wish to touch upon, with regard to the number of officers taken upon this Vote. The right hon. Gentleman very rightly bewails the shortage of officers, and we have ascertained from official documents that he has laid before us that there has been a large falling-off in the number of officers even since he assumed his present post. The right hon. Gentleman has issued in an Army Order this morning a statement of the scheme by which he proposes to meet that deficiency. I endeavoured to deal with this scheme on a previous occasion and I do not intend to go into it again now, but it seems to me that further reductions—automatic reductions—of officers are inevitable owing to a variety of causes other than those for which the right hon. Gentleman is responsible. There is the aftermath of the South African War and the block of promotion which resulted from it, but the falling off is aggravated by his reduction of units and his bringing home of units and placing them on reduced establishments. There is one particularly bad case which I do not apologise for bringing before the House, because it concerns my old regiment, and because I know it is creating very widespread interest. It affects the position of the Royal Garrison Artillery officer, because in addition to the causes which I have mentioned which have led to the blocking of promotion, the position of these officers has been seriously affected by what is called the bifurcation of the Regiment. The Regiment was split up into two branches, Garrison Artillery and Field Artillery, and I remember very well at the time, because I was myself affected, that we were assured by the War Office that the officers of the Garrison Artillery should suffer no detriment from the separation as compared with officers of the field branch. But what has taken place since, as far as the War Office is concerned? I have been examining the list, and I find that majors of my own standing have, in eleven years, lost four years as compared with their contemporaries in the Field Artillery. Senior captains head the list with over twenty years' service, which cannot make for Army efficiency, and there are 200 senior lieutenants at the head of the list with eight years' service, whilst promotions are only afforded at the rate of seventeen in a year. At this rate it will take twelve years to work off this batch of lieutenants, and the last of them will have twenty years service as subalterns. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, his attention having been directed to this growing grievance, he will hold out any hopes to these officers of having their position ameliorated, or if he cannot, will he put them out of their misery at once. I have been told by many of them that if nothing can be done for them, they would rather be told now so that they may retire before it is too late to seek another field of employment. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to use this material, the most valuable trained material in the British Army, officers of the highest technical training in the service. Surely he can find some use for them in these new great schemes which he is introducing. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will this afternoon give some answer to this point, and hold out to these officers the prospect of a better future, or else pronounce upon them a definite sentence. I do not wish to detain the House. I am aware that the ground is very narrow which we have to tread in debating this question, but I do wish in conclusion to repudiate what has been stated on the other side of the House and in another place, that we, in bringing forward these objections to any detail of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme, are actuated by party motives. Surely it is possible for us to differ from the right hon. Gentleman and the Government upon these highly debatable and technical matters without incurring that charge, and it is really absurd to suppose that because we do not slavishly agree with all the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman that, therefore, we are guilty of party bias. Really that line of argument will not do. It will not do for the Government to try to shelter themselves behind that bogey. The right hon. Gentleman can possibly belittle our opinions in the eyes of this House but I hope that he will attempt some answer to the arguments that have been addressed to him, not by politicians, but by professional soldiers of the highest possible repute, and that he will, in particular, reply to the contentions of Lord Roberts, whose speech in the House of Lords on this artillery question has caused so much uneasiness in the public mind. I hope at least he will attempt some answer that is reasoned and that does not impute to the professional critics any motives which are political or unworthy.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): I think, Mr. Speaker, that it will be convenient if I pass from the speech which has just been made to the Motion which has been proposed, but there is one observation which I should like to make at once. If all the speeches on Army reform had been made in the temperate and reasoned tone of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down, I do not think that complaint could be made. Indeed, I am not going to make a complaint in any matter but one, and it has nothing to do with the hon. and gallant Gentleman. But there have been things said during the last few days which are very discouraging to the new Territorial Force. That force, after all, is a delicate plant. The sapling has only just begun to show above ground, and if you proceed to pull it up, and complain it is not yet an oak tree, all I say is that the prospect of progress is rather hopeless. Legitimate discussion, discussion of serious points, are useful and valuable. But to pour contempt upon the efforts to raise a Volunteer field artillery is only to discourage the many men—after all, whether they succeed or not, they are actuated by the most patriotic of motives—who, whether working in the County Associations or in commands in various parts of the country, have been sending us letters of complaint saying that their prospects have been rendered more doubtful by speeches of criticism made at this particular juncture.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: We have received letters also, but they are letters of congratulation.

MR. HALDANE: But not from the same gentlemen.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: Of course not.

MR. HALDANE: Not from the same gentlemen—the gentlemen who are endeavouring to get the Volunteers to fill the field batteries. But I do not want to pursue that subject. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the position of the officers of the garrison artillery has been made hard because of the reduction in that branch of the service, due to the change of policy. That policy was the result of a conference between the Admiralty and the War Office;

and it means that the defences in this country and the defences abroad are organised on a more mobile footing than they were on the old footing. We are no longer in the days when the enemy would be so kind as to bring ships within range of a fixed battery, and the changed conditions have given rise to a considerable reduction in garrison artillery. I can assure my hon. and gallant friend that what he has said to-day shall not remain unnoticed, nor shall I forget what has, indeed, been much in my mind in connection with the new military policy which is being carried out.

Now I turn to what is the great question before us. We are discussing the Vote for the number of men, and the speech of the hon. and gallant Member has raised, quite legitimately from his point of view, the proposition that we are not taking in the Vote enough men for the artillery, if we are to have an adequate home defence force as well as an adequate Regular Force. That is the thesis which is very legitimately raised, and I am glad to have the opportunity of making some explanation about it, because I believe that under the argument which the hon. and gallant Member has addressed to the House there lies a very great fallacy. What is the size of the British Army to be? It is an Army consisting of something quite different from what Continental armies consist of. On the Continent, where your land frontier is conterminous with that of another country, where you have only an imaginary line of demarcation, your whole force must be in the first line. All outside can be but a reserve. You must get an Army mobilised and ready for war at short notice. But our island position, while it imposes on us the necessity of a great fleet at sea—and that is the real foundation of our military strategy—enables us to have a small Army for the defence of the country, and an Army fashioned on quite a different footing from all of the Continental armies. With us you can—and if consistent in your military policy you will—divide your force into two, a first line and a second line—a first line which must be ready for action just as a Continental army is ready for action, and a second line, the purpose of which is upon the outbreak of war to prepare itself to come up as a second line for the relief of the first. The first may have to go oversea. The first may be worn out by wastage of war. Your second line is not designed to be ready on the outbreak of war in the same fashion as the first line is. It is rather a line in reserve, which in the early stages of a war will acquire strength and efficiency. That is a conception only possible on the footing that you have command of the sea; and it is on the footing that you have command of the sea, and a small Army for your first line, that the system is based. If that be true, your second line goes into its war training mobilisation, not for immediate fighting, but for its war training. You must organise it as closely as you can on the pattern of the first line; have your brigades, your divisions, and every thing ready, so that every man shall understand what his place may be, and what his functions are. You must give to this second line—because it is a Volunteer Army on a Volunteer basis and you can only give it just so much training as Volunteers are able and willing to take—enough training so that when mobilised on the outbreak of hostilities for their war training they may harden and acquire efficiency as rapidly as circumstances and public spirit will allow. If that is so, the Territorial Army is designed to be as ready as it can be on the outbreak of hostilities and to mobilise to take war training. Six months is what we should like to get. You may have to do your best in great emergencies at the beginning of a war, but I never contemplated that the Territorial Army should be regarded as ready to meet with an equal force of highly-trained troops landing on these shores at the first outbreak of hostilities. In order to resist an invasion you have first the Fleet, secondly your Regular troops at home in the event of sudden or surprise attack. If you are sending your troops abroad, you must be careful not to send more than you can spare consistently with such defence as is to be maintained until the Territorial or second line hardens into efficiency. That is one reason why I do not think these 160,000 men of whom we have heard so much is at all too large a force. You might have to send four divisions abroad within three weeks or a month. You would not be wise, unless you were perfectly sure that your naval dispositions were such as to make it absolutely certain that no blow could be struck at the heart of the Empire, to send more than that until the Territorial Force was considerably hardened. The Regular troops at home would be a formidable force for any invader to contemplate encountering, particularly as week by week would be producing the hardened men of the second line. That is why the Government invited the House of Commons to pass the Act of last session under which a Territorial or second line force could be automatically mobilised for its war training on the calling out of the Reserve. That is the structure of the whole scheme. On the outbreak of hostilities the second line force becomes mobilised, but mobilised to go into war training. The essence of the Act is that the automatic mobilisation is a mobilisation for war training.

I have dealt with this subject, repeating what I have said ten times before, for a reason. I quite agree as to the great authority of Lord Roberts. He is our most brilliant commander of troops —perhaps the most brilliant commander of troops in the world at the present time; but I really cannot follow Lord Roberts's reasoning on the broad question of military organisation. He speaks of preparation for a surprise attack as if the plan was that the Territorial Army was organised to resist the surprise attack—as if we were contemplating a situation when all the Regular troops should be away, and as if we had no Navy which could resist invasion, and the Territorial Force was to be brought face to face with I know not how large a Continental force suddenly descending on these shores. If we relied on the Territorial Force to deal with that situation, I agree that we should rely on very little. I have never put that forward. In the case of such a bolt from the blue we should have, I hope, the whole expeditionary force, especially those actually serving with the colours, at our back. I have never for a moment contemplated that we should be left in such a situation with no protection from the Navy and no protection from the Regular Army; and I am the more puzzled with Lord Roberts's speech because I cannot but remember that only three years ago, in 1905, he was a member of the Defence Committee which gave certain advice which the Leader of the Opposition gave to this House. I understand that his speech was based on calculations made by the Defence Committee—he told us so at the time—and the Defence Committee, of which Lord Roberts was a member, told us that only a raid of 5,000 men or two raids of 5,000 men were to be protected against. It really detracts from the authority of however eminent an expert, if views so totally and diametrically opposite are put forward, and the country asked to accept both of them within so short a period. I believe myself that the right hon. Gentleman opposite probably put the figure too low. I should not like to pin myself to the proposition that not more than 5,000 men could be landed. The sea is wide, accidents do happen, and for a matter of security you must make better provision than would be made by merely reducing the risk to that level. I agree with the principle that you should rely on naval protection against any large invasion, that you should rely on the old British policy of faith in transports and keep at home a second line force large enough to ensure that, if the enemy should bring his troops in sufficiently large numbers, he would require transports of such magnitude that the Navy would have a target to hit.

Now that I have wholly parted company with Lord Roberts, and have admitted that, if the conception of immediate reliance on the Territorial Force in case of invasion was correct, the criticisms of our scheme would be well founded, but have shown what an entirely different basis underlies the Government plan, let me come to some points raised by the hon. and gallant Member which will appear in an entirely new light in view of the principles I have stated. I have always felt that our first duty is to make the Regular artillery of the expeditionary force efficient. For that purpose you require ammunition columns, and the cheapest method of doing that is to get 15,000 efficiently trained men to supply the wastage of war. In the time of the South African war the bulk of the batteries were at home training drafts. There were, I think, forty-five in South Africa, and about sixty at home training drafts. Whether that is the real figure or not does not matter. You must always in any circumstances keep a number of batteries at home to supply your drafts. The necessity is now greater because of the large ammunition columns which are required for the quick-firing guns. The general calculation is that sixty-six batteries are sufficient for the Regular field force and thirty-three as training batteries. These batteries are put on a two-gun basis. I have not reduced the men. If the House wishes to be reassured as to the state of the artillery, I say I have never professed to reduce the artillery; I have reduced other things, but not the artillery, because the artillery was not efficient. I have recognised that I had not only to make economies, but to obtain efficiency; and the state of the artillery since I came into office is certainly no worse, and, I think, a great deal better than it was before. On 1st April, 1906, the establishment was 29,879 Horse and Field; on 1st April, 1907, 29,938; on 1st April, 1908, 30,159. That, of course, includes what we have provided for India, because we treat the Force as one for this purpose. There has, therefore, been no reduction in the Regular Artillery, and I pledge myself to this House not to reduce the Regular Artillery until I can provide for every man who goes off some four or five men who can take his place. If that is so, what would be the position? You would have your ammunition columns, which I regret you have not got at the present time. You would have your thirty-three batteries on a training footing, but they would have a certain amount of Regulars, and they would each have in addition, besides the two guns, four guns more. The guns are all there. Sixty-six batteries have large reserves of guns behind them, larger than was suggested by the Mowatt Committee. We also have four guns in addition to the two used for training for every training battery. Therefore, suppose you did run short of artillery, and suppose we were reduced to extremities, you have a very substantial number of guns, of men, and batteries which can be put on a six-gun basis, and if you have succeeded in training artillery and in enlarging the force of artillerists in this country, then you will have no difficulty in making use of these batteries in time of great emergency, but I like to look at these thirty-three batteries as fulfilling the legitimate function of training drafts for the Regular artillery, and of being that support which ought to be behind the Regular artillery in case it had to go abroad. The hon. and gallant Member opposite says that it is not enough, because you cannot rely upon the Volunteer field artillery which you are proposing to raise. I would admit the argument of the hon. and gallant Member if it was directed against the proposition to produce field artillery which was to be fit to take the field immediately on the declaration of hostilities. But I have pointed out that the organisation which we are making of the Volunteer field artillery, and the training we propose to give, is ample for the purpose of bringing together an organisation to take war training on the calling out of the Regular Reserves when mobilisation takes place.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE said that his objections, as far as he was personally concerned, applied with almost equal force to this artillery after it had been embodied for six months. He did not believe its efficiency would be materially increased.

Mr. HALDANE: I am glad the hon. and gallant Member has come to the real point. I would remind him that on this question of driving, which I think he has in mind, his authority would not be recognised as quite so great as that of those who realise the difference between garrison artillery and horse and field artillery. The hon. and gallant Member is what they call a sedentary artilleryman. The garrison artillery do not depend on driving, nor are they of the class of artillerymen whose opinions have to be directed to the question whether men should make efficient drivers or not. Between garrison artillery and horse and field artillery there is a great gulf fixed.

Their mysteries are totally different mysteries, and really the discussion of the last few weeks about the mysteries of the artillery are extremely confusing to the mind of the hon. Member who gives himself the trouble to distinguish between the various kinds of artillery. I said in a moment of irritation last summer that the mysteries made by artillerymen about their craft were almost as great as the mysteries made by the theologians; I apologise to the theologians. Why a skilled and highly-trained artisan should not learn the handling of a gun I do not know. [AN HON. MEMBER: The riding of a horse.] Why a bank clerk in London should learn to ride a horse with the Honourable Artillery Company, and a bank clerk at Sheffield, Glasgow, or some other city should not learn it equally well, is a mystery I cannot fathom. The hon. and gallant Member said, quite justly, that I must not put forward my assertions against the assertions of Regular soldiers, and particularly against the assertions of soldiers as eminent as Lord Roberts. To this matter I have given a great deal of attention and consideration; I am always most reluctant to produce the opinions of experts who are advising me, and for that reason I thought it right to refuse to produce the Minutes of the Army Council and Reports of the Inspector-General, which contain all sorts of confidential things. But, in view of the appeal made to me, and repeated again to-day by the hon. and gallant Member, I have done this. I did not think it right to put any pressure or even specific questions, but I referred various eminent soldiers to the controversy which is taking place, and asked them whether they thought fit to express any opinion on the subject which I could read to the House of Commons. I have been furnished with replies by the Inspector-General of the Forces, Sir J. French, and also by the Army Council. The question I submitted to them was this—taking the conception of a second line which I have given, the second line which is to be trained on mobilisation, on a war footing so as to harden it, could you get an efficient field artillery force? It is the very question which the hon. and gallant Member raised a few moments ago. This is what Sir J. French says to me this morning. I will read it just as I have got it. It is a little long, but the Motion is so important that I think the House ought to have Sir J. French's own words. Sir J. French is not only Inspector-General of the Forces but Inspector-General of the Territorial Force that is to be, and it is his duty to be responsible for efficiency. This is what Sir J. French sent to me this morning and which he wrote under date of yesterday:—

"Lord Roberts laid down in the House of Lords that artillery requires a much longer and far more intricate training than is afforded by the provisions of Mr. Haldane's scheme. He gave it as his fixed opinion that with so little training the Territorial batteries will prove to be useless, and even a positive danger to their own side. The Field-Marshal went on to urge the Government to abandon all idea of Territorial artillery, and to spend the money so saved in raising a force of mounted riflemen. In the statement of his case Lord Roberts appears to entirely lose sight of the principle which lies at the very root of Mr. Haldane's scheme—namely, the six months training on mobilisation. His argument is altogether based on the fifteen days annual course, and he even fails to make allowance for the *voluntary* work and training which will undoubtedly be carried on, over and above the regulation fifteen days, in many divisions. It may be remarked that it is this kind of work which has raised the batteries of the Honourable Artillery Company and Lancashire to a state of efficiency which is universally acknowledged by experts. Allowing for such an amount of training, I cannot think that these Territorial batteries which have undergone it will be either useless or dangerous. It seems to me that such an idea is not borne out either by military history or peace experience. In the American Civil War and in the latter part of the Franco-German War batteries of field artillery did excellent service with just as little, and in many cases even less, previous training. It appears to be generally overlooked that this six months' training, which is to commence on mobilisation, will be carried on under exceptional circumstances. War will be actually in progress. National spirit and enthusiasm will be aroused to the highest pitch. Training will be conducted, and willingly undergone, morning, noon, and night. Every man will be throwing his utmost heart and endeavour into the work, and straining every nerve to shorten the period which must be passed before he can go to the help of his comrades who are falling every day. With efficient instructors more will be done in this six months than could be looked for in two or even three years of ordinary peace training. Our own experience of the early days of the South African war should have taught us this lesson. It was a constant saying of Napoleon that national feeling, great energy, skill, and perseverance had far more effect in converting raw material into soldiers than long spaces of time. One great object which the scheme has in view is to create reality out of what was little more than pretence. The first step towards this end is to lay down and work upon a thoroughly sound organisation, which shall be suitable to the demands of modern war. How can any organisation be sound or complete without its full quota of artillery? To leave out this, perhaps the most important of all arms, as Lord Roberts proposed, is simply inconceivable. Then, where are we to get it? Of course, all soldiers would prefer the highest trained artillery they could get, but the country insists on economy, and I assume no Regular artillery is available. This scheme, therefore, provides the only means available of getting what we require. In my humble opinion the prospects of securing a sufficiently trained force are quite good enough to fully warrant the experiment. I do not suggest that the Territorial artillery which may be called upon to take the field on completion of the six months training will be equal as regards efficiency, either in *personnel* or *matériel*, to the regular artillery of the first line. But what about our enemy? If our best forces are becoming exhausted and require expansion, so do his. Huge gaps will have been made in the ranks of his *personnel*, which must, of necessity, be filled up by less highly trained substitutes. As regards *matériel*, the life of the quick-firing gun is limited. *Matériel* will suffer to a much greater degree than formerly, and it is certain that after six months of war any enemy we may be fighting will have to put ordnance into the field which will be in no way superior to the converted gun to be issued to the Territorial Army. For these reasons I venture, with all deference, to differ entirely from the conclusions arrived at by Lord Roberts."

I told the House that before venturing to put these plans before Parliament, or, for that matter, before my colleagues in the Cabinet, I had them very closely sifted. I submitted them to a Special Committee, the Committee of Imperial Defence, on which Sir J. French himself sat; and the six months plan was very largely the result of the suggestions of Sir J. French and Sir Neville Lyttelton, Chief of the General Staff. Sir Neville Lyttelton at one time was very critical of the notion of Volunteer field artillery, and he was critical because the plans that were put forward three years ago, and the plans put forward earlier, provided for no systematic training on a war footing of the proposed Volunteer field artillery. But the plan now embodied on the outbreak of hostilities would give them as much training as you could at that moment—it may be six months, it may be two months, or it may be one month, still they are progressively improving. It may be that that was one of the circumstances which has made a great alteration in Sir Neville Lyttelton's view. The other is the inspection which he has made of the Volunteer field artillery actually at work since that time. As the hon. Member challenges me I will read the opinion of Sir Neville Lyttelton and the Army Council which I obtained the same day. I gave them the question, and what I am reading is their general pronouncement upon it. The only signature not attached to the document is that of the Adjutant-General, who was absent, but I can say from personal knowledge I have no reason to suppose that he dissents from the conclusions. They say—

"The necessity of maintaining a second line Army on the basis of citizen service is generally admitted, and given this condition, its limitations as regards the amount of training that can be given in peace are self-evident, and for this reason no very high standard of efficiency can be looked for. This is very apparent in the case of field artillery. It is not in our power to give it the amount of training necessary to bring it up to the standard of Regulars or near it. All we can do is to lay down for it the highest scale of training it can accept, which will give them a reasonable standard of efficiency, and this I think can be done. Proposals were made three years ago to create Volunteer field batteries, but it was only contemplated to give them a month in camp and additional drills, and this I considered inadequate, though I did not object to an experiment on these lines being tried on a small scale. But the training proposed for the Territorial artillery of to-day is far more thorough, as, in addition to the annual camps and drills, on mobilisation it is to be embodied for as long as is thought fit, and the training it will then receive will certainly improve it to such an extent that no invader could ignore it. I am not arguing as to whether we shall get this breathing time or not. It is perhaps possible that we shall not, but I think we shall. Of course if we are attacked in a time of profound peace we shall not, but then the Regular artillery of the expeditionary force will be in the country. It is a question whether, viewing the nature of the greater part of England, 196 batteries are not too many, but that our second line Army should be denuded of all its artillery because it cannot be brought in peace to a high standard of efficiency is to ignore the purpose for which that Army exists. I have shown this paper to Sir W. Nicholson and Major-General Hadden, and they are both in agreement with it. I may add that Sir James Wolfe Murray, the late Master-General of the Ordnance, was quite in favour of raising Volunteer field artillery."

I think that these expert opinions are of interest, and if I am not wearying the House I should like to read the opinion of the Director of Military Training who has worked out this scheme as one of the heads of the General Staff. He says not so much about the general thing as about what he has seen at work. Last summer we had some interesting manœuvres in Scotland, and we brought together cavalry and Yeomanry, as well as Regular and Volunteer artillery. We had field artillery batteries there, and it so happened that they were in camp with a large number of troops for a considerable time on my own small place in Perthshire. I had the opportunity of seeing them closely, and this is what General Haig refers to in his letter. He says to me—

"You will no doubt remember that two batteries of the Lanarkshire Artillery Volunteers were turned out for special training last summer; and were brigaded with Regulars for about ten days at the Scottish manœuvres. The chief object of this was to enable us to form some opinion as to the standard of efficiency which Volunteer Artillery could reach under the conditions then existing. I attach a letter from Colonel May who as assistant director of training accompanied me specially to watch the work of this Artillery.

I fully agree with what he writes, and am of opinion that what was done by these sections of Volunteer Artillery was satisfactory proof that Volunteer Artillery can become mobile enough, even under the old system of training, to take part in field operations. I did not, however, see this Artillery at practice, but Colonel Wing's report on Allen's (Sheffield) Corps, 4th West Riding of Yorkshire, dated 9th August last, seems sufficient testimony on this head. His words are 'the practice was very satisfactory.' Wing is now Staff Officer for Royal Horse and Field Artillery to the Commander-in-Chief at Aldershot, and his opinion is that of an expert of to-day. Copy of Wing's report is attached.

In discussing the question of the standard of efficiency to which Volunteer Artillery can be brought, it seems highly important to notice that very great changes are being made with the view of providing better means for training. Briefly put they amount to the following:—

1. The Volunteer Authority is now to be organised as Field instead of Garrison—and will be formed into Artillery brigades with quick firing guns.
2. A Divisional Artillery Commander and Staff is provided to direct the training throughout the whole year.
3. The training of officers and Non-Commissioned officers of the Territorial Artillery by means of the Regular Training Brigades.
4. The methodical association of Volunteer Artillery with Regulars at training centres and camps.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): These training brigades—the whole of their time and energy is not to be devoted to the Special Reserve as we understood the other day?

MR. HALDANE: It is their primary function, but the officers and non-commissioned officers will be there to give instruction and help to the officers and non-commissioned officers of the field artillery force, who I have no doubt will go there and be present at the training and will gain great instruction from seeing the work done. It is done every day. You have your Yeomanry officers attached to cavalry regiments, and what can be done in the case of the Yeomanry can certainly be done in the association of Volunteer artillery with Regulars in training camps—

Lastly, the General Staff Officer in each Division of the Territorial Army brings the General Staff at Army Headquarters into close touch with the Territorial Force, so that the results of what is being done will be closely watched and proposals for improvements in organisation or training will be carefully thought out, and put forward as necessity demands. For these reasons I deprecate any change in the policy of creating a 2nd Line Army complete in all arms and services.

That is the Report of a Member of the General Staff, General Douglas Haig, one of the most modern soldiers in the Army, a man of great distinction and service in the field who deprecates what I have been asked to do, which is to get rid of the Volunteer field artillery. I am afraid I am wearying the House but there is one other Report by Colonel May on Colonel Grant's Lanarkshire batteries. He says this—

"The strongest argument as to the efficiency of Grant's field artillery in Scotland is to be found in the fact that the day you first saw the batteries on the moors above Cloanden, I was riding with you and pointed them out as Volunteers; you would not believe me at first, and said they were Regulars."

This is a very distinguished artillery officer riding with one of the most distinguished generals in the Army, and one of the heads of the General Staff, and if he at first sight took them for Regulars I suspect hon. Members opposite would also have taken them for regulars.

"I rode into the battery and again inquired, and found that, as I said, they were Grant's people. You will remember that Major Shaw, commanding one of them, showed you and me a bank which they had just driven over, and which a Regular battery had declined to negotiate."

This shows the difficulty and danger of criticising field artillery.

"Before I met you on that morning, a day of mist and rain, I was with the batteries in action, and I formed a good opinion of their fire discipline. Their officers had a satisfactory knowledge of ranging and fire discipline, and the guns were well served. The fire discipline was good, and the guns were well placed considering the difficulties of the terrain. I inquired of the officers of the Regular field battery, which was in action close to them, and who were during pauses in the course of the operations moving about amongst the Volunteer guns, what opinion they formed of the quality of the training displayed. They told me they were surprised at the degree of efficiency which had been reached. The batteries certainly had adequate mobility. The harness and equipment and accoutrements were well put on; the driving was good; and the rules of our training manual as regards fire discipline were complied with. The officers showed a good knowledge of the equipment, the packing of ammunition, etc., and knew their work. I reported this both to you and Mr. Haldane, but I was careful to tell the latter that Grant's corps was an exceptionally good one, trained very ably by an enthusiast, and that he could not expect to find the same efficiency in all Volunteer batteries. I also told him the guns were not shotted, and that until you actually fire shells you cannot tell whether fire discipline is as good as it looks or not. At the same time the efficiency of these particular batteries was illustrative of what might be done by Volunteers properly instructed. I should like to add that I saw Allen's West Yorkshire Artillery Volunteers in practice camp last summer, when I accompanied Sir N. Lyttelton to Fleetwood. On that occasion I saw practice carried out by three batteries. The results were distinctly good. The umpires were Regular officers from the brigade at Sheffield. I made notes and got their reports, which were very satisfactory. I had these typed, and I believe Jeffcott could find them. At any rate I showed them to you, and to Mackinnon and Sir N. Lyttelton. Of course in this case it may be objected that Allen's is a special corps. But, again, if one corps can arrive at such good results, it furnishes an example of what others may do."

That is what I say too. If the Volunteer field artillery in the face of the greatest discouragement, without anything like the organisation and equipment which we are giving them, have been able in the case of those two corps to rise to that pitch of excellence, there are other corps throughout the country that can rise to it also.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Do I understand that these Scottish batteries are on the same basis of organisation as the Lancashire Field Artillery?

*Mr. HALDANE: Oh, no; the hon. and gallant Member is, I think, under a misapprehension. The Lancashire Field Artillery refers not to Colonel Allen's Sheffield Volunteer Field Artillery corps, training in Lancashire, but to the Lancashire Field Artillery. It is a pure Volunteer corps under Colonel Allen. I have quoted the General Staff, I have quoted artillery experts, and I have quoted the Army Council and the Inspector-General of the Forces, and I do not think I am under the reproach of having no distinguished soldiers to back my opinion. But there are one or two other distinguished persons I wish to refer to. There are the opinions of eminent statesmen who have expressed their views on the proposition to re-arm the Volunteer field artillery with modern guns. I am in this position, that not mine adversary, but my predecessor in office has written a book about the Army. I will not say: "Oh, that mine adversary had written a book!" but I will say that the book contains a reproach against me for having stopped the good policy of the late Government, which was to produce a Volunteer field artillery. I was going very cautiously at that time. I had to arrest, as it seemed to me, the too rapid progress of a number of experiments. But it is true that this is no new idea of mine. Here I come back to 1900 to the Marquess of Lansdowne, then Secretary of State for War. On 12th February, 1900, he said—

"It is our intention to re-arm the Volunteer artillery with modern guns. To those now using guns of position we propose to give the semi-mobile 4·7-in. guns . . . . In the hands of the rest we shall put modern field guns. They will be armed with modern 15-pounders of the latest and most modern type."

I fear I can claim no credit in this matter. Now I come to Lord Midleton, who, speaking on 8th March, 1901, said—

"Lord Roberts is willing to make a great and final step in advance and to agree that with certain training"—

much less than we propose to give—

"he will rely, from the experience of this war on Volunteer batteries, a certain proportion in each of the last three Army corps. The admirable practice made by the C.I.V. batteries in the Transvaal satisfied Lord Roberts that

that step could be taken without danger. Therefore in the last three Army corps, while there will be a certain proportion of Regular troops, and in each fourteen batteries of Regular artillery, one-third of the Army corps—seven batteries—will be found in each of the last three Army corps by the Volunteers and Militia."

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon has committed himself also extremely deeply about this. He said in a letter to the *Standard*, on 17th June last—

> "In 1905 arrangements perfectly satisfactory to the Volunteers and most advantageous to the Regular Army had been made whereby two important brigades of Volunteers were to be supplied with a quick-firing field gun and specially trained as field artillery."

Therefore, there are good reasons for making this experiment. I think I have shown beyond all possibility of contradiction that a large body of the most modern and experienced military opinion is in favour of this proposal of including Volunteer field artillery in the second line. We have preserved the Regular artillery intact and given it an organisation such as it never possessed before, and I think we shall do well, now that we have determined, on the Second Reading of the Bill last year, to create a Volunteer field artillery to be careful to do nothing in our speeches to discourage the officers who are working upon it, and who are doing their best to raise a force in the belief that they are rendering a good service to the country. For my part, I have confidence in their power and capacity and am prepared to back them. Hitherto I have been denounced in two directions—on the one hand, that I have been too niggardly in making reductions, and, on the other, that I have done too much. I think I have shown, with regard to the expeditionary force, that there is a great deal of misconception. What we are doing is to keep 68,000 men with the colours to supply drafts, and the reason is that we have to keep a certain number of troops in India, Egypt, and South Africa. As regards India, the Secretary of State for India is responsible for the establishment, and he decides what would be proper for the coming year. It is an establishment which does not merely exist for foreign purposes. It is an establishment which arises out of this, that we are responsible for the safety and well-being of from 250,000,000 to 300,000,000 people in that country, and we have a certain number of white troops there because we are a white Government, and the establishment is that which the experts fix as the one which is consistent with our safety. Then I come to Egypt, where Lord Cromer and Sir Eldon Gorst are supported by a certain force, and on the question of the size and composition of that force I am largely guided by the requirements of the Foreign Office. The requirements of the Foreign Office will not admit of a diminution of that force. I wish to emphasise the fact that you have in Egypt the possibility of racial and religious conflict, and those are the considerations which fix the force at its present level. Anybody who argues that that force should be reduced must be prepared to deal with these considerations. We may be on the best terms with France, Germany, and all the European Powers, and yet there may be religious and racial questions in Egypt which involve that force. In South Africa, I agree, there is the possibility of reduction this year. This year I am going to bring home four battalions of infantry and a regiment of cavalry. Our real reduction during the period the Government have been in office is 21,700 men. We have brought the Army down close to where it was just before the war. The Infantry is rather less. That is a very substantial reduction. I have had to build up the Artillery, I have had to give medical service, transport, Army Service Corps, and generally to do what was necessary to provide a thoroughly organised force The reduction, therefore, is much larger than appears, but the result of the organisation has been that we have got a force smaller, but more efficient in the opinion of the military advisers than before, and that has been done at a cost of £5,000,000 less than was being spent before we came into office. I say solemnly to my hon. friends that they may make the greatest possible mistake in driving the War Minister in this matter. Far better let him go slowly, to proceed with a plan in his mind, and think and work it out cautiously. I took office on the pledge not only of economy but of efficiency, and I believe that to be the wish of the Liberal Party. We have tried to make the Army more efficient. We believed we could reduce the number of the men and the cost of the Army, and we have done it. But the task is one of overwhelming difficulty, and it is the more difficult when you have two horses to ride at the same time, and which I must ride. Under these circumstances I submit to the House of Commons that the rate of progress is one which is sufficiently rapid, and that nothing but reaction—reaction which would defeat the very purpose my hon. friends have in view—would result from pressing me to conclusions which I could not justify.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): The right hon. Gentleman ended on a somewhat pathetic note, when he said he had two horses to ride and that he found the operation difficult. Even an artillery driver more experienced than those on a Volunteer basis, might find the operation beyond his powers. I do not propose to deal with the latter part of the subject, and would only say a few words upon the first horse. Now, Sir, it is not easy always to deal with this question in a non-controversial spirit in answer to the right hon. Gentleman, because he quite unnecessarily drags in controversial insinuations and makes personal attacks. I never in my life heard a speech less party in tone than that which was delivered by my hon. friend near me. How was he rewarded for the spirit in which he approached what is admittedly a most difficult problem? The right hon. Gentleman gets up and with his own profound knowledge of gunnery matters, informs my hon. friend that he did not belong to that branch of the service which would enable him to pronounce upon a question of field artillery. My hon. friend has a perfect right to debate the subject from his own experience, which is much greater than that of either the right hon. Gentleman or myself, neither of whom is either a horse-master or a gun-layer. In fact, my hon. friend did not base his criticisms simply upon his own experience, but upon the observations of those who are still artillerists and with whom he has been in conversation. My hon. friend has behind him a vast body of military opinion. It is not merely a question of what Lord Roberts says, or what this particular general or that particular general says—there may be differences of opinion—but if you asked the experts of the Army what they thought of the Volunteer artillery they would not give a view substantially different from that given by my hon. friend. I think the right hon. Gentleman and I are agreed that at the outbreak of war, and when the whole of the Regular Forces normally in this island are still here, probably we need not have any alarm as to the adequacy of our home defence against any probable or even possible invasion. The second point on which we are agreed, I think, is that if the Volunteers were called upon to show their military capacity against trained Continental troops in the first few weeks after the outbreak of war, they would find themselves wholly unable to rise to the height of the situation. We are agreed that so long as the Regular troops are at home those troops and the Fleet together are adequate. I will put it differently. Those troops are sufficient to require any foreign nation desirous of invading us to make the attempt with so large a force that the Fleet would be amply sufficient to prevent such a force landing. We are agreed in the second place, that if such a force did land and there were not these Regular troops within our shores, the Territorial Force of the right hon. Gentleman, with or without its own artillery, would be quite unable to deal with the situation. The difficulty arises when we consider what may happen if a war has broken out when the expeditionary force has left these shores. If the House want really to get a clear idea where the precise difficulty of the situation lies, it lies there. There are two cases. The first case is that in which the Territorial Army has had its full opportunity of six months training. It is on the hypothesis that they have had a full opportunity of six months training that all the documents which the right hon. Gentleman has just read from his military advisers are based. That is the only hypothesis they take into account. Sir John French not only assumes that the Territorial Army has had its full six months training after the outbreak of war, but he assumes that the invading force is exhausted by six months war. Sir John French lays it down that the invading force will have had to take refuge in an inferior gun with officers of inferior training, and that these hypothetical invaders will be from a nation already exhausted by six months of arduous hostilities. I cannot imagine what the right hon. Gentleman can have said in the question he put to Sir John French which should make that most distinguished officer suppose that the invading force must necessarily come from that nation against whom we had sent our expeditionary force. Sir John French had not before him or did not think it necessary to reply to what are the real difficulties which this country may have to face after war has broken out. I do not think we have a right to hope that if this country is exposed to invasion, the invasion will proceed from a nation already exhausted by having to resist our expeditionary force. I take it that the danger which may assail us and against which we have to guard is the danger that after we have been engaged in hostilities with a foreign country some new and unexhausted enemy will appear in the field. That peril never seems even to have occurred to Sir John French as something which had to be considered by the General Staff. Assuming that the Territorial Army has had six months training, the first question we have to ask is, what will be its degree of efficiency. I do not desire to undervalue it. I conceive that men of the stamp of our Volunteers and Yeomanry, subjected to the severe discipline which I daresay they would be ready and anxious to undergo in some great national emergency, would be far from a negligible quantity after six months training. But I do not think it possible to hope that six months training, even under the most strenuous conditions, would enable our infantry Volunteers or Yeomanry to reach the level of a great Continental army. In what condition would the Artillery be after six months training? I listened most carefully to the expert opinions which the right hon. Gentleman read out. They seemed singularly inconsistent with the opinions given by equally expert authorities only a few years ago, when a very similar question was raised under a Government of which I was a member. These variations, I suppose, must be expected, and we need not be surprised even if the same officer should sometimes in different years give rather different views on highly technical military questions. [AN HON. MEMBER: Even Lord Roberts.] Let us take the opinions on which the present Government act. They come to this, that these eminent advisers think that, after six months strenuous training, you may get a certain number of batteries as good as C.I.V. or the Honourable Artillery Company, or perhaps some other of the field artillery which is being created in this country, either on a Militia or a Volunteer basis. I am the last man to say that that degree of efficiency is negligible. On the contrary, there is ample testimony that the C.I.V. and the Honourable Artillery Company did excellent service in South Africa.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): And the Colonial forces.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Does the right hon. Gentleman really think he will get a sufficient number of corps of that quality to supply the whole of his Territorial Force with the necessary artillery? That is surely a question of fundamental importance on which no light is thrown by these documents. The right hon. Gentleman is relying wholly on this Volunteer artillery to supply the artillery for his Territorial Army. He has produced no evidence that he is going to get artillery up to the highest standard of Volunteer artillery in the past, which, I agree, is not a negligible standard. I do not believe that even at the end of six months it would be safe to rely on such artillery as could be supplied by that training. I believe it would be folly to rely upon them without some addition of those highly trained Regular batteries which can only be produced by long, arduous, and strenuous practice. How do you know you are going to get your six months training for your Territorial Army? The right hon. Gentleman only considers two hypotheses—the hypothesis of the Regular troops being here or the hypothesis of the expeditionary force being away and the Territorial Army having six months training. Is it a law of nature, is it an immutable arrangement of Providence, that the Territorial Army is to have six months in which to train after the expeditionary force has gone? Supposing that you have sent your expeditionary force abroad in the first few weeks of the war, and that long before the six months training is concluded fresh complications arise and a fresh foe menances your shores. That is a situation with which the Government have not dealt. This is not contemplated by Sir John French, and I fail to see how it is met by the right hon. Gentleman with his first line and second line of defence. He says, truly enough, that if you foresaw these dangers you would keep the troops at home. But how can any Government engaged in hostilities with Power A be quite sure that six months will elapse before complications arise with Power B? It is just when you are in difficulties with one enemy that somebody who was your friend may think it convenient, useful, and profitable suddenly to become your enemy. That always seemed to me the fundamental difficulty of the right hon. Gentleman with his Territorial Army, and that is why we think that he is risking a great deal by his reduction of the Regular artillery. The right hon. Gentleman is always dwelling on the fact that he has provided the necessary ammunition for training and made the Regular artillery more efficient. What he has done is this. When he came into office he found the artillery on a three-years basis and rapidly creating its own Reserve of fully-trained men. He has now put it on a six-years basis, and not merely has he diminished by half the number of men who go to the Reserve, but he has diminished it immensely. The consequence is that while under the three-years system we were gradually getting into a position in which we should have an immense body of highly-trained artillery, adequate for the Regular Army and for the Home Army, the right hon. Gentleman has defeated that; and while I do not doubt that the artillery of the expeditionary force is quite adequate for any task it may be required to undertake, it seems to me that we should be far better situated for supplying the Home Army with the requisite artillery under the condition of things which the right hon. Gentleman found when he came into office than under his own scheme.

Mr. HALDANE: Your batteries abroad were depleted under the three-years system. You could not find drafts to keep them going.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My recollection is that all our advisers, while they thought it absolutely necessary to revert from the three-years system to the seven and five-years system in order to provide drafts for the infantry, were unanimous in the opinion that the three-years system should be retained for the artillery, as it had the incomparable advantage of supplying us with a great reserve of artillery. If I may sum up the contentions I have ventured to lay before the House I put them thus. I am not concerned to discourage Volunteer artillery. I do not wish to disparage such highly trained batteries as the Glasgow battery, the Sheffield battery, or the Honourable Artillery Company. I think they are a very useful addition to our national defence. I am, however, sceptical as to whether a large number of Volunteer batteries can ever be got up to that degree of efficiency which is required; but, even if they could, you ought to supplement them for the purpose of home defence by a highly-trained Regular artillery, and therefore, my most earnest contention—the point I put with the greatest insistence to the Government—is this. Do not let them concentrate their gaze on two possible positions only. Do not let them contemplate only the period when our Regular troops are at home or, as an alternative, the period when they are abroad and the home Army has received a long period of training. Other hypotheses must be considered, other situations may arise, and I attach no value to the highest expert opinion when I see that it is based, not on the many circumstances that may arise, but on two possibilities, and on two possibilities only, without taking into account the infinite number to which our national defence may be exposed. For these reasons I do most earnestly ask the Government, not to abolish the Volunteer artillery, not to discourage those who really are competent to turn out batteries of a very high degree of efficiency; but at all events, to remember that to rely on these, and on these alone, is to fly in the face of the experience of all nations. Therefore, I ask them to supplement the efforts of our patriotic, admirable, useful, and excellent citizen soldiers by giving them that expert assistance which is the fruit, and only the fruit, of long, laborious, and painstaking training.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said the House was running two hares at once, and he proposed to take part in that sport. Both the matters to which he wished to refer should be dealt with by the House with its eyes open. The larger was raised by the Amendment of the hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Army. Before he came to that, however, he wished to make a remark in regard to the other matter which had interested him throughout the whole of his Parliamentary life. The arguments they had heard that night were most familiar to many hon. Members, because they had not moved one bit for the last twenty years. Apart from party feeling, it must be admitted that everybody had endeavoured to try some experiment in the direction of a cheaper artillery for the second line. The great difference was between those who thought it wise to create a purely Volunteer artillery, and those who would try a mixed force. He thought it would be found that those batteries which had been so highly spoken of that evening were mixed batteries—batteries in which they had enlisted besides Volunteers a very considerable number of Regulars of long service. That fact had not been mentioned before. It would be remembered that years ago they were told, as they were told again on this occasion, of the success of the American Field artillery in the Civil War. There was an element of truth in that, because in that war Volunteer artillery were engaged against artillery of the same description; they were trained to the high state of efficiency to which they attained on both sides simultaneously. They became highly trained by constant practice against one another, but neither side was good at first. The right hon. Gentleman had destroyed the Volunteer Force which had existed up to the present time. They had pointed out that the right hon. Gentleman's scheme would draw the men in the towns, but that it would kill Volunteering in the rural districts. That is what had happened. In his own division, in his own county, the whole of the Volunteer infantry and Volunteer artillery had been disbanded, and not one man would be found in the Territorial Army. In fact, to use the words which he had just applied to his critics, the right hon. Gentleman was tearing up the Volunteer Force by the roots and killing it. The six months training had been thoroughly discussed; but when his right hon. friend first proposed his scheme, he stated in all his speeches what had not been heard that night, that there was to be an organisation of certain portions of the Territorial Force for the purpose of coast defence, and the repelling of raids, and field artillery was mentioned. His right hon. friend said that for the defence of river mouths and similar landing places, it was important now-a-days to have in addition to batteries of fixed guns field artillery. He confessed that he doubted the readiness, under the circumstances described that night, of a purely Territorial artillery for field work. He did not think it would be fitted even for the extraordinarily trying work of manning quick-firing guns for the defence of such positions as the Forth Bridge and Rosyth, or Newcastle-on-Tyne. In an attack on such repairing yards as these, it was a matter of seconds before the fast destroyer running in at night would be out of the zone of fire at short range. The artillerymen must, therefore, not only sleep at the guns in the event of a declaration of war, but in anticipation of war. His own belief was that the very high efficiency of Regular artillery was required in cases of that sort, and that we should not be able to deal with them on the Territorial plan. The next question was of much moment and had been often discussed before. Year after year his hon. friend the Member for Cardiff, when he was sitting on the Conservative side of the House, his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Abercromby, and Mr. Claud Lowther and others divided the House for a reduction in the Regular Army on the ground taken that day by the mover and seconder of the Resolution, viz., that if the country could not otherwise bear the rapidly increasing scale of expenditure in the case of the Fleet a means of reduction might be afforded by a change of the system of the Regular Army. His right hon. friend had sustained his position with admirable words. As soon as he took office he told them that our coasts were completely defended by the Fleet. That was the Government theory, but they could not discuss the adequacy of the Fleet or the future scale of it upon that question. They all knew that it was a very costly defence to which the Government were committed deeply, the War Office as well as everyone else. It was said that our coasts were completely defended by the Fleet, and that the Army was wanted abroad oversea and must be of very high quality to strike at a distance, of limited dimensions, and capable of rapid transport. That was the theory, and in a few days his right hon. friend declared that for the first time he had created a really mobile and immediately transportable Army of this description. He had heard that statement too often, not only from his right hon. friend, but from Lord Midleton, and his predecessors, and he could not believe it to be new each time. The 167,000 men of his right hon. friend were very nearly the same as the 160,000 men of the noble Lord who, when Mr. Brodrick, said in this House that he was able to mobilise immediately and transport across the sea a striking and expeditionary force of 160,000. He admitted, however, that the artillery for that force was not complete. The artillery for two Army Corps was he said complete, and he was then completing the artillery for the third Army Corps. They gave him the money to do this, but then they were told that the force he had stated was on paper and did not exist, and that what they paid for did not exist. Was it any more than on paper now? It was no use to say that it ought not to be on paper and that we ought to get it, but under the system of linked-battalions the Home battalions were ridiculously beneath their strength. They all knew the difficulties which successive Governments had had in this matter the fact being that they could not get the recruits.

MR. HALDANE: Oh, yes; the recruiting was never better, and will improve as soon as I get rid of the disease of the three years system which at present it is suffering from.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE replied that Lord Portsmouth in the House of Lords a few days ago virtually pledged the War Office to re-introduce that system. He had read the noble Lord's words with the greatest care and he had admitted that it would not be possible to keep up the Reserve without re-introducing some proportion of men on the system of short enlistment. [Mr. HALDANE dissented.] Well, if they did not do so the system would only break down all the sooner. He never professed to be an economist and he would desire a large expenditure on the most highly-trained branches of the Army, especially upon the cavalry and the artillery. But the Government were not doing this and were diminishing the number of horses for these services, even if they counted the ponies which had been taken back from the mounted infantry. He did not think the Secretary for War had shown them that he had created this expeditionary force which all his predecessors claimed to have created on the same scale and in the same fashion. He thought that the present system was extravagant and that they needed economies. It was too much to bear along with the increasing Fleet, and he, therefore, supported the Motion of his hon. and gallant friend.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme) thought the unfortunate Volunteers had had a very bad time from the right hon. Gentleman on the benches opposite. The old Volunteers and the new Territorial Force had been treated in a somewhat cavalier fashion, and more particularly was that the case with the artillery branch. The whole of the argument on the other side was based on the expert opinion of officers of the Regular service. The Leader of the Opposition had said if they took a poll of all the officers of the Regular service he was quite confident that the majority would say that no artillery trained on a Volunteer basis could be an efficient weapon. What would happen if they suggested that solicitors should do the work of barristers? Did anyone think that if one polled the barristers they would come to any other conclusion by an overwhelming majority than that the solicitors were not competent to do their work? Or if it was suggested that county councils should look after matters of Imperial importance, and one polled the members of the House of Commons as to whether the councils were capable of doing it, that House would be almost unanimous in reserving to themselves all matters of Imperial moment. Supposing the Colonial officers who were engaged in the late South African War were polled as to the relative values of the Colonial and Imperial troops engaged in the war; they would come to an almost unanimous opinion that the Colonial troops, although raised on a voluntary basis, were infinitely superior to the Regular troops engaged. Wherever one appealed to parties who were interested, who had a bias unconscious to themselves, for expert opinions, they would get opinions in favour of their own particular branch of the service and hostile to any possibility of anyone else doing the work which they had been specially trained to do. He did not attach any importance whatever to the judgment of Regular officers as to the possibility of Volunteers performing under exceptionally favourable circumstances the work that the Regulars had been accustomed to do. He supposed that he also was liable to bias in this matter, because he happened to have been a Volunteer officer of artillery who went out to the late war, who commanded Volunteer artillery in action, who marched 2,700 miles and was twenty-six times in action. He did not claim to be an expert, but he claimed to know something about the services that Volunteer artillery could render, and about the difficulty of training Volunteer artillery. They were not mere position batteries, but were genuine field artillery, having ten horses to each gun with gunners mounted on unbroken ponies collected on the veldt. The opinion of the Regulars on the Elswick battery to which he belonged could be judged from the fact that their guns were in such demand that they were split up and single guns were sent out with each column, because the commanders wanted so have an Elswick gun with their columns. That battery was raised very largely at the Elswick works. It was impossible, however, for any workman, even if he made a 12-pounder gun, to be intimately acquainted with its complicated mechanism, and these men, although they came from Elswick, were not skilled gunners. They certainly had a certan number of Regulars in the battery, but there were not more than one in six at the outside. He quite admitted that Volunteer artillery did require slightly more training than any other form of the Volunteer service, but what experience did he have? After they were embodied they had three weeks training at Newcastle, and all that time they were excessively busy getting harness uniforms, etc., and did not have much time for drilling. Then they had three weeks at Aldershot, also a somewhat curious experience because the horses were unbroken, and it was a surprise to him that the casualties did not commence at Aldershot. They had no other training until they got to South Africa, where they had a fortnight in camp, and altogether they had two months training, then went straight to the front. The general impression was that their shooting was a good deal better, largely owing to their having a better gun. He maintained that the experience of the Elswick battery in South Africa showed that it was perfectly possible to train Volunteer artillery in a short time, in six months certainly to fully the equal of the average Regular. He thought hon. Members opposite made a great mistake in always comparing the Volunteer with the ideal soldier. The ideal Regular soldier did not exist except in the imagination. Perfection was not obtained in any regiment of the service, and yet it was the perfect soldier who was always compared with the Volunteer service. It was not a fair comparison, because many of the Regular soldiers in South Africa did worse than the Volunteers. He did not think it fair to compare the Volunteers with the ideal Regular soldier either under the old or under the new conditions, but the training would be superior to what it was in the old times.

The training of the Territorial Force was to be far more than that given to the old Artillery Volunteers. There used to be four or five mounted drills a year, and the men used to march up and down the Moor at Newcastle, go through a few evolutions, not of very great necessity from the point of view of real field practice, and return equally steadily and very carefully. That was all the training they had in field artillery work. Under the new conditions they would have mounted drills all the time they were in annual camp, and six months mounted drill before the Volunteer Artillery went into action in time of war. In the old times they never fired a single shell over a land range. Everyone knew it was impossible to judge of the effect of shrapnel except over a land range, and that the result of firing over a sea range was practically *nil.* So that with the new conditions of artillery firing over land ranges their artillery ought to be infinitely superior to the old and they had the prospect of having a thoroughly successful second line of defence. He hoped his friends in the country who were officers of the Field Artillery Volunteers, and who hoped to become officers of the new Territorial Field Artillery, would understand that all those who had seen artillery in the field, and those who could judge of it from intimate knowledge, were persuaded that the Volunteers with their energy, patriotism, and individuality had in them the making of a thoroughly sound force to defend the country.

*Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said that after the extremely illuminating and interesting speech of the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for the City of London, he would not go into the question of field artillery. He would point out, however, to the Secretary of State for War that in quoting the American Civil War in support of his case for the Volunteer Artillery he had not quoted an instance of great value. In the first place, the artillery forces on both sides, the Volunteer artillery, were absolutely untrained, and, therefore, the experience gained from that war was of very little value. But if hon. Members read the life of Stonewall Jackson, they would find that the South suffered very much in the beginning of the war owing to the Regular Artillery of the North being so superior to the Volunteer Artillery of the South. He was entirely with the right hon. Gentleman in his efforts to create some artillery for the new Territorial Force, which at the present moment had no artillery at all. It was surely better to have some than none, and though artillery on a Volunteer basis might not be so good as Regular Artillery they could confidently hope that within a given time—six months after the outbreak of war—it would make great strides towards efficiency. He therefore congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having made some effort to give this force some artillery. Passing to the more general aspects of the case, the House was now discussing the number of men to be voted as the necessary number to defend the Empire. A reduction of 10,000 men had been moved by an hon. Member, one of whose statements was most surprising. The hon. Member had said that the Army could be reduced by 10,000 because the policy of the Government was a policy of peace. That was not only the policy of the Government, but of the Opposition and the country as well. But could the hon. Gentleman guarantee that that was also the policy of foreign nations? If he could, then we could reduce the Army by ten times 10,000 men. But so long as the hon. Member could not guarantee that the policy of foreign nations was a policy of peace we must have sufficient men to guarantee our Empire against invasion. The hon. Gentleman who seconded the reduction had suggested that we should go back to the old system of the long service Army—a system tried before the time of the Indian Mutiny and a dismal failure when the Mutiny broke out. At the present time men did not want to spend all their lives in the Army; and apart from the difficulty of obtaining men under the old long service system, was it likely that men who had spent twenty or twenty-five years in a tropical climate would be as physically fit as men of twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, who had not been for many years in an enervating climate and were in the prime of life? The Secretary of State for War in a very interesting Memorandum some time ago, had compared very accurately the state of the establishment of the Regular Forces in 1898, the year of the outbreak of the South African War, with the establishment at the present time, and had said we had now 4,000 less troops than then. We had in 1898, 166,000, and now we had 162,000 cavalry and infantry of the line. He did not agree with this reduction of 4,000 men, and he certainly disagreed with the reductions the right hon. Gentleman had made since he came into office. On what ground could the right hon. Gentleman justify our having a smaller establishment than we possessed at the time of the outbreak of the South African War? Would he say we had too many troops then? We could not find many Regular troops in Great Britain to send out and had to raise troops hurriedly for that purpose, and if it had not been for the assistance rendered by our self-governing Colonies, we should have been in a worse fix than we were. Since then we had become responsible for the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, which necessitated a garrison of 25,000 men, and we had become responsible for Egypt; we had put ourselves in the position of being the perpetual protectors of the Egyptian people and had had to increase our garrison there. Were these things a justification for reducing our establishment? Or could the right hon. Gentleman say that in exchange for that reduction he had a much larger second line to supplement the Regular Force? He did not think the right hon. Gentleman could, because, after all, these Special Reserves were only their old friends the Militia, under a new name. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman could say that he had a larger number of men to take the place of the Regular soldiers, whose number he had reduced compared with what it was before the oubreak of the war. Even the liability which the Special Reserve had taken upon itself to serve abroad did not help them in any way, because, as the House knew, whenever war broke out, the Militia, who were not liable to do so, always did go abroad. It was very unfair, he often thought, that a man should be called upon to go abroad when he had not enlisted except for service in the United Kingdom, and so far as the country was concerned he did not see that they would be in any better position with the Special Reserve than they were with the Militia. If that were so, he could not admit that even a greater number of men, trained on the Militia basis, could compensate for the loss of a number of men trained in the regular orthodox way. A man who had served a number of years in a battalion, who had been accustomed to discipline, who had got to know the work of his regiment and had the regimental feeling, was bound to be far more efficient than any man who had trained either as a Special Reservist or Militiaman, or in any other way, only for a certain time during the year. Could the right hon. Gentleman justify the reduction of the Army which he had made because of the increase in the Army Reserve since the outbreak of the war? It was quite true that the present Army Reserve was very much greater than it was at the outbreak of the South African War, but then they must remember that after all, this Reserve would very soon dwindle away again—it was purely temporary—and the men they were voting now were the men who would produce the Reserve eight or nine years hence, and not the Reserve at the present moment. It was impossible, therefore, when they were voting the men, to rely on the Reserve which was created under a former state of things; they must look to the Reserve which would be created in the future state of things. Looking at the number of men they were voting, one could not fail to look abroad through the Empire to see whether they had got enough to defend our great Dependencies and our coaling stations. Had they enough troops in India? It had been said that the regular number of battalions, some fifty-eight, had not varied very greatly in the last twenty or thirty years, but he thought all sides agreed that that number was sufficient. But there was one branch of the service in India which he thought was dangerously inadequate, and that was the Artillery. There were in India at the present moment eleven horse artillery batteries and forty-five batteries of field artillery. They were only enough to take the field with the English troops, but there was no artillery to take the field with the Indian native troops. Surely that was not a proper or satisfactory state of things. How could they expect the Indian native troops to take the field it they did not provide artillery to take with them? In that respect it was impossible to deny that the artillery force in India was dangerously inadequate. Hon. Members had complained as to the garrison kept in Egypt at the present moment. He could assure them that their view as to the size of the garrison was not held by any European in Egypt; in fact, it was rather thought, even since the increase of the garrison two years ago, it was still not sufficiently strong. He did not think the House quite realised that when two years ago there was a difficulty with Turkey, Egypt was on the eve of a serious rising, which if it had taken place might have made it impossible for Europeans in Upper Egypt to escape with their lives. Hon. Members might not remember that, but if they took the line, rightly or wrongly—rightly according to their ideas—that we must directly interfere with the Sultan in the government of his Macedonian dominion—he sympathised very much with that line—they could not expect that the Sultan of Turkey would help in keeping the Mahomedan inhabitants of countries under our sway in that obedience to our rule which he might otherwise do. Therefore, if our foreign policy was carried out in certain directions, they must be prepared to have sufficient troops in other parts of His Majesty's Dominions in order to counteract the effects of that policy which they themselves advocated. He left Egypt to take the case of Malta, whose garrison had been very greatly reduced since the present Government had come into office. When questioned as to this last year, the right hon. Gentleman sheltered himself behind the Commission which had made a Report as to the desirability and possibility of diminishing the garrison. Of course he had no means of knowing what evidence the Commission took, but he did know that when the proposition was made that the infantry garrison should be reduced by one-half, certain night manœuvres were carried out to ascertain whether, in the opinion of the military authorities, a landing could be effected at the back of the island, and whether the town could be taken if only defended by the present garrison, considered by the Government to be sufficient. That operation took place, and though the night was very rough, and there was great difficulty in landing, the umpires were unanimously of opinion that the force supposed to represent the enemy, not only landed successfully, but succeeded in taking the town of Valetta and of course the dockyard there. It seemed to him that, in the face of this very important operation, it was a most dangerous policy for His Majesty's Government to have reduced the infantry garrison and continued to keep it at a low level. They had heard only that afternoon that large naval works had just been completed at Malta, where a new dock had been constructed. Surely, if it was worth while to spend millions of money in building a dock, it seemed a penny wise a pound foolish, for the sake of a couple of regiments, to jeopardise our position at Malta, because if war broke out and the enemy landed at the back of the island, the present garrison would not be able to protect it. In the case of Gibraltar, it was a matter of common knowledge that there was grave dissatisfaction at the absurd reductions of the garrison there. It was extremely hard that men should not get any time off at all, and the only result of these reductions was discontent in the service. It was a question where the men were going to be found to work the big guns at Singapore, Aden, and other coaling stations. If it was worth while having these fortified places, surely it was not worth while, for the sake of 1,600 garrison gunners, to seek to make a small saving by running the risk, when war broke out, of finding these important coaling stations in a position in which they could not offer an effective defence against the enemy. There was one other reason why he thought it very ill-advised to reduce the Regular Army, and that was the state of unemployment in the country. He saw, according to the trade unions report in the *Labour Gazette* that morning, that last February 6·4 per cent. of the people were out of work as compared with 3·9 per cent. in February of last year. That was to say that in February of this year there were more people out of work than at any time in the corresponding month for the last ten years. He was the last person to say that they should make men soldiers simply to give them employment, but surely it was better to teach unemployed men to defend their country than to pay them full wages for doing nothing, as some hon. Members desired. In the present state of unemployment the Government ought to be very chary about reducing the Army and thus sending men into the Reserve, with the result that they would increase the number of those who were suffering from lack of employment. He had quoted the trade union figures, but members of trade unions were after all those who felt the pinch least. It was among the floating population, to which those figures did not apply, that unemployment existed most. He strongly objected to this reduction of 4,000 men, and he went further and said that he strongly objected to the reduction of 25,000 or 30,000 men made by the Government since they came into office. The only result of the reduction would be that in the not distant future a very large expenditure would have to be undertaken by the successors of the present Government to repair the damage they had done to His Majesty's Forces.

*SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.) said he proposed to confine himself strictly to the subject of the Motion. For that purpose he took as his text a sentence from the Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War which accompanied the Army Estimates. When dealing with the question of effecting reductions in the Army, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Looking to the future, it is, I am convinced, impossible to make further reductions in Army Expenditure on a considerable scale unless we first of all reduce the number of troops serving abroad."

He would have preferred the right hon. Gentleman to speak at the close of the debate when he would have been in a position to reply to the considerations which had been, and would be adduced on this point. And he regretted that when he did speak he did not refer at all to a matter which he himself was convinced was the only way of effecting a reduction in the Army of this country. There was a very small reduction effected in South Africa, but he observed that practically it did not take financial effect during the current year. For some reason or other there was delay in communications with the Colonial Office, and no financial advantage would be gained from this reduction until next year. But at all events it was satisfactory to find that the War Office had been in communication with the Colonial Office in respect of the reduction of the Army abroad. He could find nothing in the Memorandum which showed that the Secretary for War had been in communication with the Secretary for India with the same object. He had addressed the House on more than one occasion on this question of the reduction of the Army in India as affecting the reduction of the Army in this country. This consequential reduction was due to the existence of the linked-battalion system, the Cardwell system as it was called. In this matter he entirely dissociated himself from the observations made by the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Resolution. He favoured the linked-battalion system because it enabled this country and the House to exercise some control over Army expenditure in India. If they abandoned that system and went in for an Indian Army such as existed in old times there would be simply no control which that House could exercise over unlimited expenditure in India. The Secretary for War knew that very well, and had pointed out in his Memorandum that if they did abandon the linked-battalion system the result would be a very heavy and undue burden on the Indian people. With that conclusion he entirely agreed. The Secretary for War had told them, and he had listened to his remarks with amazement—it was not the first time he had made them in that House—that there had been no change in the strength of the Indian Army, certainly for many years, and indeed he had gone so far as to say that that strength had been settled after the Mutiny, and that we still retained the same Army in India as was sanctioned after the Mutiny. That was a complete misconception of the facts. After the Mutiny the strength of the British Army in India was not settled at all. All that was settled was the proportion which the British troops should bear to the natives. It was settled that the proportion should be one-third, or one-half, varying in the different Presidencies, and that there were to be no artillery among the native troops. He went to India forty-one years ago, not very long after the Mutiny. There were then 55,000 British troops in the Army. Lord Lawrence was then Viceroy, and he exerted himself to reduce the strength of the Indian Army. He reduced it by 7,000 men, and at an examination before a Committee of that House he gloried that he had done so. Subsequent Governor-Generals had done the same thing. In Lord Ripon's time the Army was about 50,000 men. At that time there was a Commission in India considering the strength of the Army, consisting of all the most distinguished officers in India, and after discussion with the War Office in this country it was decided that a maximum of 60,000 troops was ample. After some further discussion extending over a year or two more the number was increased to 61,000. And then what happened? There was a sudden panic in this country due to the Penjdeh incident. It was feared that war with Russia was imminent, and that India would be invaded. Lord Randolph Churchill was then Secretary of State for India, and the British Army in India was suddenly increased by 11,000 British, and about 20,000 native troops. This increase remained till the Boer War when the number of British troops was reduced to 63,000 in consequence of the drafts made upon India to supply men for South Africa. At no time during his life was England in a more anxious position than during that time. We were not friendly with some great Powers, and were waging a very costly war. At that time we were able to reduce our British Army in India to 63,000 men. It stood at 79,000 at this moment. These were the facts illustrating the oscillations and the changes which had taken place in the strength of the British Army in India during the past fifty years, and they were completely different from the complacent statement made by the Secretary of State that practically there had been no change made in the strength of the Army since the Mutiny. The British Army in India had fluctuated according to the fluctuating policies which prevailed, and it stood this moment at a higher figure than ever before. What was our position now? We had just triumphantly concluded an Agreement with Russia. What was the importance of that Agreement—did it possess any importance at all, if it did not enable us to reduce a single soldier in that country? They were told it was of enormous strategic importance. He thought it was, and he also thought it was extremely desirable that we should have a treaty with Russia. We stood at peace with her and with the whole world. We had an alliance with Japan, there was the *entente cordiale* with France, and our position with the whole world was now more satisfactory, as during the Boer War it was more unsatisfactory, than in the course of his lifetime he could recollect. And so it was that they appealed to the Government to take advantage of this Agreement. Let the Secretary of State for War confer with the Secretary for India as he had done with the Colonial Secretary, and consider very seriously whether some reduction might not be made in the strength of the Indian Army in the face of the facts which he had brought to the notice of the House. The Government of the day under the influence of panic had lost no time in increasing the strength of the Indian Army and kept it permanently on the books. Now when we had concluded what was described as one of the most important Agreements in history we were not able to follow it up by the reduction of a single man in the Indian Army. What a satire all this was on our boasted diplomacy. These were the observations he desired to bring to the notice of the House in support of the Motion. It was the third time he had addressed the House on this subject, and he regretted that he had never had the good fortune of speaking in the presence of the Secretary of State for War. He trusted his hon.

friend the Financial Secretary would represent to the Secretary for War the views he had put before the House and urge upon him the advisability of consulting the Secretary for India with a view to reducing the Indian Army.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said the Secretary of State for War concluded his speech by appealing to hon. Members below the Gangway not to push him too far. That appeal was wholly unnecessary in his case, and personally he regarded with great apprehension the continual efforts made by some of his hon. friends upon the extreme Left to dig holes for the right hon. Gentleman to fall into. The hon. Member for East Nottingham's figures, like his facts, were somewhat erroneous. The hon. Member who moved the reduction had urged that this country could not go beyond a certain expenditure in maintaining the Army and Navy. That argument should not be pushed too far, and hon. Members should bear in mind that they could not leave out of account anything that might affect our sea power. Because they had a great Navy—and they were sure to have very heavy building programmes for the Navy for the next few years—it was no use arguing on that account that they could let the Army down. Hon. Members spoke as if this country had no land frontier to protect, whereas, as a matter of fact they had a greater land frontier in various parts of the world than any other existing Power. He did not wish to enter into these general questions except to refute the doctrine of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme that an untrained soldier was as good as a trained one. He had never met any persons taking part in military operations who agreed with that contention in any sense. The figures quoted with regard to the Indian Army had put an entirely false complexion upon this important question. It had not been mentioned to the House that whereas, before the Mutiny the Army in India consisted of upwards of 700,000 men, to-day it was only 226,000. It was quite true that the proportion of European troops was far greater now than it was before the Mutiny and he thanked God for it, because as a matter of prudence, after that great disaster in India it was arranged that instead of the native troops remaining in the proportion of five to one as they were before the Mutiny they should never fall below three to one. The British soldier in India now was in the proportion of ·023 per cent. of the population whilst soldiers both British and native were in the proportion of ·07 per cent. of the population. Those pitifully small numbers were responsible for maintaining the peace and prosperity and welfare of 300,000,000 of inhabitants of India, as well as for the safety of the lives of our fellow-countrymen, and for the security of the hundreds of millions we had invested in India. He happened to be on the Indian frontier when the scare took place which brought them within an ace of war with Russia. and the tune was different then. We had only 74,000 British troops in India now, but that was 6,000 short of what was considered necessary after the Mutiny. The hon. Member for Nottingham said that he did not object to the Cardwell system, although he had argued that they should go back to a long-service Army in India. After consultation with a great many authorities he maintained that a long-service Army in India would be far more expensive to the Indian Exchequer than the present system. Their experience in India showed that they could not raise a long-service Army there conveniently, if at all, at the present day. Under the linked-battalion system no doubt India had to pay a high price for her Army, but for every penny spent she got the flower of the British Army. If any one of those men fell sick he was sent home and another man was sent to take his place, and it was not bad finance if for paying a good price they got a good article. The burden of his hon. friend's speech was that now the Anglo-Russian Convention had been concluded that menace had gone, and therefore they ought to reduce the Army. He was surprised that an hon. Member, who had been in the East, should use such an argument as that. So far from Russia being weaker now through having been relieved of her responsibilities in the Far East, she was all the stronger especially in the Middle East, and therefore they would be madmen in this country if they accepted such an argument. Had hon. Members read the latest evidence contained in Mr. Fraser's book, which showed that new Russian railways were converging upon the Afghan frontier, by means of which enormous armies could be rapidly placed upon what was practically our Indian frontier? Nobody who knew the actual facts were even likely to come here and say that, because of the Anglo-Russian Convention, they were in a position to reduce the troops in India. He knew that in a book written by the hon. Member for East Nottingham, it was stated that they might remove the whole British Army from India and govern it safely under treaties made with foreign nations. The hon. Member actually thought they could abolish the Army, but he did not think there was a single person in the House who would agree with him, or that his fantastic notions of the sufficiency of treaties was likely to find support in any serious quarter. He had also said that at the present moment England was at peace with the world, but that was an ominous statement, and history proved that the world was often on the eve of an outbreak when such complacent reflections were made. He could not admit the argument that all the great Indian soldiers were opposed to the Cardwell system. Reference had been made to the ease with which the garrison could be reduced in Egypt. He was amazed that the same school of thought which would reduce our garrison in Egypt and in India was that very school which encouraged the Egyptians and the Indians to stand up against our rule, and was prepared to treat Macedonia as if it were an English county. The hon. Members who urged those views were the same men who so far from appreciating the peace and prosperity brought upon Egypt by Lord Cromer actually in this House refused to support the small pittance voted to his Lordship, the merest fraction of the money he had saved this country. With regard to South Africa, it could not be an easy thing to reduce the garrisons there, when they heard every day in the House their white brethren treated as if they were unjust judges and oppressors of the native races. Only the year before last there was a serious rising which required the interference of troops. Hardly a day passed when the assumption was not made that humanity was peculiar to ourselves and that man who left this country to administer, or to assist in administering, a foreign country on behalf of Great Britain fell into the depths of inhumanity.

SIR H. COTTON: All mankind are potential burglars.

*MR. REES said he failed to see the point of the interruption. It did not appear to him to be pertinent. The hon. Member for Tyneside asked what crimes had we committed that anyone should attack us? Well, what crimes had a Bond Street jeweller committed, but he had to lock up his diamonds? The hon. Member for Tyneside asked who were our potential burglars? He replied, all other nations, so long as we had anything worth taking away from us, and we had all the best of the earth, or a good deal of it. The hon. Member for Blackpool had referred to the question of reduction from the labour point of view, and he was not going to argue the point which he raised, but he was bound to point out that during the debate the addition to the ranks of the unemployed of 10,000 soldiers was treated as a trifling matter. It did not appear to him that the representatives of the dockyard constituencies or the Labour Members really regarded the money spent by the State upon military establishments as unproductive expenditure or wasted money, for loud objections were raised when arsenals and salaries were reduced. Expenditure which produced the wherewithal to support industries and families was, in fact, productive expenditure. He hoped that for the benefit of those who were far away from this country serving us abroad it would not go forth to those who read these debates that the position taken up by his hon. friend the Member for East Nottingham was allowed to pass without being immediately challenged and refuted, both in regard to the facts and to the figures of which he made use. The army in India was far smaller than before the Mutiny, and above all, the European troops were below the figure considered necessary after the Mutiny, not to resist Russian aggression, but to render India safe. Of course any hon. Member could take any view he liked as to the attitude of foreign Powers, and he might believe that they all desired the British nation to retain all the best things in the world simply for the love of the British and their ways, but he did not think that the attitude of hon. Members who were continually assuming that foreign nations were less humane than we were was likely to bring about that position in which we should be able to keep the best of everything without keeping our powder dry. He sincerely hoped in regard to the Indian Army that it would be distinctly understood that the greatest danger would attach to the reduction of the European troops below the present figure. He could not understand why they should be reduced when India paid for all she got, and was a great assistance to Britain in maintaining the Army in its all British aspect. The population and area of India had largely increased, the difficulty of governing it had certainly not decreased, and there was no case for reducing our insurance. He felt very strongly on this subject, and he was most anxious to say that the view placed before the House to-night that because a strategic convention had been established with Russia, important and valuable as he thought it, we could immediately reduce our troops and trust to the good feeling of that or any other nation, seemed to him to be a piece of positive—well, he did not know by what word to describe it consistently with the rules of Parliamentary order so he would resume his seat.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside) said the hon. Member for the Montgomery Boroughs had given the House an instructive illustration of the psychology of the militarist mind. He had urged the necessity of continuously increasing the armaments of the Empire.

*MR. REES: Not at all, Sir.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Well, he said he would be glad to increase them if he could.

*MR. REES: Not at all, Sir.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said the hon. Member, while undertaking to correct the hon. Member for Nottingham, had not been at pains to get the latest figures on the subject; he had brought into the House figures two years old. They were the figures published in January, 1906. That was hardly the way to put correct statistics before the House. But he was not concerned so much with the figures, for that was a matter of no great importance. He was concerned with what he might term the mental attitude of his hon. friend on this subject. The hon. Member's contention was that they were to maintain the strength of the Army in India at the present enormous figure after having made an agreement with Russia which had been acclaimed as the most advantageous diplomatic arrangement ever made in their time. The hon. Member assured them that this did not make the slightest difference. We might improve our position as much as we pleased, but we could not reduce the Army. If that was so, what was the use of the triumphs of diplomacy? Why should hon. Members be asked to spend their time considering diplomatic arrangements and to speak of them in terms of the highest eulogium when not a farthing of value came from them in the long run? From the point of view of the hon. Member for Montgomery Burghs, diplomatic treaties were futile indeed, because all the nations of the earth were in his view potential burglars.

*MR. REES said the word was his hon. friend's, and he merely adopted it in debate.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said his hon. friend adopted the words and he could not run away from them now. He declared that all the Powers with which we had to deal to-day were potential burglars.

*MR. REES again dissented.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said "burglars" was the word used and he proposed to stick to it. His hon. friend did not seem to realise that the principle which he had set forth made out that the British colonists, nay, that the members of the Indian Civil Service, were potential burglars, and that these potential burglars were members of the service to which he formerly belonged, although when such men belonged to another nation he would not accord to them a single good quality.

*MR. REES said that he, on the contrary, credited foreign nations with as much humanity as ourselves, differing in that respect from the hon. Member.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said he had been at a loss to know what good quality the hon. Member accorded to the people of any other State. His hon. friend was still exceedingly anxious to destroy as many of them at a moment's notice as he possibly could. What he wished to point out was the kind of temper, the state of mind, the political philosophy, that stood behind this demand to which they were always listening for the perpetual expansion, or at least the fullest possible maintenance, of the armed forces of the Empire. They were asked to take the authority of men whose conceptions of the relations of the States and peoples of the world were worthy of the ages of barbarism, and for whom a great deal less could be said than for those who held such views in the ages of barbarism. A number of hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition Benches shared those views. The hon. Member for Blackpool had referred to the position at Malta and Gibraltar, and he seemed to suggest that, notwithstanding the *entente cordiale*, and the improvement in foreign relations due to diplomatic arrangements, the Empire was more vulnerable and in greater danger than ever. The question was: Were they, or were those gentlemen, morally perverted in the conceptions they held as to the relations between us and foreign nations? An hon. Member had said that we had assumed new financial burdens and new military responsibility in respect of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. That was one of the arguments which came from the other side of the House. He ventured to say that the Transvaal and the Orange Free State would undertake to defend themselves with ease against any enemy that might come against them. As to India, what rational word had the House heard to make them feel that the present figure, enormous relatively to the position of affairs, should be maintained there? He listened with interest to the speech of the Secretary of State for War on this subject, and he failed to discover any hint of a reason, save in one phrase in which he spoke of the experts. Their old friends the experts had declared that the number of the present force in India could not be reduced. The experts had said it, the fiat had gone forth, and that settled the question. He could assure the Government that if they failed to give any more intelligible reason than that for maintaining a force of 76,000 men in India, with Russia prostrate, and with Russia on terms of friendly arrangement with this country in regard to Persia, men of commonsense were forced to put the question: Were we bound to maintain that figure in terms of a secret agreement with Japan? He wished the Government to give an answer on that point. It might be a mistake to make that assumption, but if the Government did not give an explanation, he was bound to come to the conclusion which seemed to afford the only rational explanation for the maintenance of the present force in India. The Army in India was a monstrous burden on the very poorest of the population in that country. There was perpetual famine, the livestock was going down year by year, and there was growing discontent.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That question does not arise now. The question of the condition of India is only relative so far as the Army is concerned.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said he was only dealing with arguments used by his hon. friend the Member for the Montgomery Boroughs, who took up that very question. The present military burdens on India which he and his friends were seeking to reduce were part of the causation of the growing discontent in India. His hon. friend, who professed to speak with a knowledge of India, had never glanced at that aspect of the matter. The growing military burden of the Indian Army was apparently going to expand every decade, and the experts would give the same answer. He and his friends on that side of the House regarded that as a truly dangerous state of things. They were referred to the lessons of history by gentlemen who seemed to feel about history like the undergraduate who said: "It's such a splendid subject, because it does not require any thinking." If there was any lesson to be learned from the history of the great Empires of the past it was that they died of the disease of militarism. Under the Roman Empire almost the whole resources of the State were spent in military enterprises; and the diseases under which that Empire broke down were generated by the military system. That was the very case in India. He was bound to repeat that mere deliverances on the part of experts should not be listened to in the House. Let the experts say when a war broke out how that war was to be conducted, but it did not lie in their knowledge or capacity to tell the House what amount of military expenditure this country was capable of bearing. That was for the House to determine, and they said that the burden militarism pressed upon the nation unduly.

*MR. REES asked if the hon. Gentleman was under the impression that the Congress Party proposed to govern India without the British Army?

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON said that that was a most unnecessary interruption. The question before the House was whether the Army could not be reduced by 10,000 men. Surely they could debate such a plain issue. The proposition of his hon. friends was that no reason had been shown why the country should not reduce the Army by 10,000 men. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in a speech made by him in 1903 used the expression that a striking force of 80,000 men was all that was necessary.

MR. LUTTRELL: Or even 40,000 men.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Well, or even 40,000 men. That declaration was put forward by an eminent member of the Government, who surely spoke with some sense of responsibility, and this was only three or four years ago. Could it be seriously stated that anything had happened since that time to necessitate a striking force of 160,000 men, especially when we were now on good terms with Russia? Would the right hon. Gentleman tell the House whether this figure of 160,000 men had been imposed upon us by some secret kind of understanding, and was this country to be tied down to that figure, or was it the final contention of Ministers that the opinion of experts must guide the House?

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) said he had heard only a portion of the speech of the hon. Member and it occurred to him that in pressing still further on the House the reduction of the Army by 10,000 men, the hon. Member had transferred the vigorous appeal recently made for the reduction of the Navy to that of the Army. It would be a very grave move on the part of the country to acquiesce in the reduction of the present strength of the Army by 10,000 men, whilst the new scheme inaugurated by the Secretary for War was in a state of transition. No one could say, not even the Secretary for War, in what condition the Army, including the Territorial Force, stood at the present time. Much more, no one could prognosticate what the outcome of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme would be. He had listened for three quarters of an hour to the Secretary for War, and with equal attention to what had fallen from hon. Members on the Government benches, and although he did not pretend to know anything about the very important subjects touched upon, he was sure that nothing had been said which would justify their reducing the Army by a single artilleryman, cavalryman, or Volunteer If the Government had been in power for ten or fifteen years and had had a settled Army policy laid down, there might have been some ground for moving that the Army should be reduced by 5,000 men, or increased by 150 men, but he was astounded that anyone should have the courage to stand up in the House of Commons and suggest that while the right hon. Gentleman was re-organising his forces they should turn

10,000 men of all ranks loose upon the country, who were at present necessary to save us against many an eventuality which no one could foresee. He remembered the Secretary for War when he introduced his Territorial Scheme last year turning to his supporters and saying that his was not a scheme which was going to appeal to the military spirit of the country—that that was the last thing which the Government were thinking of. But he had been refreshed that day to find a different tone in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, who hoped that the military spirit would be present in the minds of the people in times of national peril. Last year when the right hon. Gentleman catered for the support of Little Englanders, he was then of opinion as he was now, that at any time of national emergency the people of this country would come forward in their hundreds of thousands in support of any scheme which the Minister of the day proposed. The difficulty in this country was not to find men but to find a Minister for War who would take advantage of the services of those men who were prepared in a time of national peril to assist the country. His belief was that the right hon. Gentleman's scheme for a Territorial Army from the day it was introduced until now had been obviously a failure. There was no more readiness for war to-day than there was ten or fifteen years ago. He would not go into the psychological question as to whether the Territorial Army Scheme existed now or not. The right hon. Gentleman had read the advice and the recommendations and opinions of a very large number of expert advisers. He thought that that was a sign of weakness. If the right hon. Gentleman, with the extraordinary ability which he had shown last year, had rested upon his own legs in this House—if he had been prepared to stand on his own foundation—[AN HON. MEMBER: That's better]—on his own logical conclusions—[AN HON. MEMBER: Better still]—in support of the Army scheme which he brought forward last year, it would have been better. But what had happened? The right hon. Gentleman confessed that all his aspirations and his logical conclusions had broken down, and he had gone to the expert and said: "Help me out of the trouble I have got into." He conscientiously believed that the Secretary for War had produced that afternoon those expert explanations and opinions in order to bolster up the statements he had made last year to the House of Commons. How was it that last year the right hon. Gentleman had not any document to exhibit to the House? Simply because he was able to produce his own scheme, which he believed to be the best in the interest of the country. Now he was showing great signs of weakness, although in the first instance they were hoping against hope that the country had at last found a Secretary for War who would rise above all party motives and solve the great Army problem. That afternoon those hopes had fallen shattered to the ground. The Secretary for War had on that occasion talked about the exact use to which the Territorial Force would be put, but if he remembered aright last year the right hon. Gentleman said that the Army which was created under his scheme would be entirely for Home defence. Since then, however, the Secretary for War had come to the conclusion that there was no fear of invasion, owing to the great strength of His Majesty's Fleet, and of what use could his Territorial Force be except to cross the seas in support of the Regular Army? Not one word, however, had come from the right hon. Gentleman to-day to show that the training which these forces would undergo would be a training for fighting overseas in support of the Regular Army. If however, they were to be ready only to repel an invasion which was not feared, the whole thing had been turned into a perfect farce. In one breath they were told that these men ought to be trained by going down a certain number of days to the coast—six weeks during the year—to repel invasion, and in the next that owing to the Reserves being so depleted they would still be in the Reserves for the next few years. That meant that in the event of war the right hon. Gentleman would have to call upon the patriotic spirit of the Territorial Army to go to the front, although in the first instance he said he would not call upon them to go out and assist the

Regular Army. Then what steps had the right hon. Gentleman taken in that event to train the Territorial Army for going abroad? None whatever. The Territorial Army, which included the Volunteers, the Yeomanry, and the Militia, if it was trained for service abroad would be better trained for service at home, whereas if they were trained for service at home they were practically useless for service abroad. These questions in connection with the Territorial Army gave rise to grave doubts in the minds of many who would like to see the scheme a thorough success. But not only had the right hon. Gentleman reduced the number of men, but he had shown a certain distrust in those who hitherto had been the backbone of this Army in supporting, and encouraging men to come forward and serve the country. The scheme also had a tendency to prove far more expensive to the country than any system that we had had before, and if the right hon. Gentleman had not already seen that it would be more expensive those who were acquainted with the country as it was before the introduction of the Territorial scheme would very soon enlighten him on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman in forming his Territorial scheme not only took over the whole forces of the Yeomanry, the great Militia battalions that existed, and also vast numbers of Volunteers throughout the country, but he took over their liabilities. He was sure that no one could tell what an immense amount of support was given to the Volunteer movement throughout the country. Large landowners in the North and South of England had assisted them by means of voluntary subscriptions, but now the right hon. Gentleman had taken these forces over he found and the country would find that the State would have to pay for them. That was the reason why this Territorial scheme had proved to expensive to the right hon. Gentlemen. They all knew by experience what generosity and patriotism would prompt a man to do.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What has this to do with the question before the House?

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he was referring to some remarks about the Territorial Army and the expense of it, but he would not pursue the subject; he only touched upon it because it was alluded to by some hon. Members below the gangway. If, however, he might conclude the sentence he would like to say that the right hon. Gentleman would find that the force had suffered financially and would suffer by having the personal interest which was taken in it by supporters of the movement in times past withdrawn. For himself he regretted that. As to the proposed reduction of 10,000 men at the present serious juncture, it was most remarkable because no details were gone into whatever, and he would like to ask the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean whether he could throw any light at all upon the question of how this reduction would affect Ireland. Ireland hitherto had been studiously kept out of the debates. It would seem to be rather a thorny subject, and many of the questions which he addressed to the right hon. Gentleman last year remained unanswered. He understood that Ireland was the best recruiting ground, and he was delighted to see that since last year matters had improved in that respect. When the Army Bill was then under discussion he had endeavoured to make some remarks, but the Chairman ruled him out of order, on the subject of the intimidation of recruits joining the Army. Since then a whole year had elapsed, and he was glad to say that things had greatly improved. He was glad to have an opportunity of saying that in the House where he had made the charge. If the Army was reduced what regiments in Ireland would be affected? What regiments in Ireland could be spared? It was a very pertinent question, because he, as an Irishman, would speak up for any Irish regiment, whether they were recruited in the North or South, whether they were the Dublin Fusiliers or any other corps. He would stick up for them as being superior to any regiment in England or Scotland, and what he asked was this, was it meant by this reduction to attack any Irish regiment? He thought that those who took the responsibility of moving or supporting such an Amendment should come straight out into the open and mention what their intentions were. There had been in recent debates a great tendency on the part of movers of Resolutions to run away when it came to a division, and some of them on that side of the House were getting rather tired of those cowardly tactics. Hon. Gentlemen of this kind when the time for a division came asked the Speaker's permission to withdraw their proposals. Honour was satisfied as far as they were concerned. They had spread dissatisfaction and yet at the last moment they would not go into the lobby in respect of the pernicious Amendments had put upon the Paper. If there was a reduction of 10,000 men in the Army owing to this Amendment being carried by a combination of Radicals and Socialists, he would ask the mover of it to say what he was going to do with those 10,000 men. This question was raised on the Navy and it was very pertinent to the subject they were discussing. Supposing an Amendment was carried in the presence of the Secretary of State for War to the effect that they ought to turn 10,000 men out of the Army, had the mover or the seconder the faintest idea of what was to become of those men? Were those men to be pensioned or were they to be thrown upon the rates? Were they to be the oldest men in the Army or the latest recruits? Whatever view was taken of it it was a cruel thing to move an Amendment of this kind. If the hon. Member had come forward and said that in future years the standard of the Army ought not to be greater than a certain number there would not be so much brutality in it, as that standard could be provided for by ceasing to recruit more than a certain number year after year; but to come down and move that 10,000 men should be flung out of the Army without any notice was quite a different matter, especially when upon the responsibilty of the Army authorities the men so dealt with might have been recruited the day before or years before. Respectable men were invited to serve their country, and when they had become proficient in the performance of their duties in the cavalry, artillery, or infantry, and had mastered the intricacies of their profession, then it was suggested that the War Office should turn round and say: "We recruited you for service at home and abroad, but now owing to the preponderance of Radical opinion in the House of Commons, and owing to the fact that we have to save money somewhere for social measures at home, we are sorry to say that you, poor Tommy Atkins, 10,000 of you, must go on the streets to-morrow." If such a course were pursued it would be impossible to get efficiency, and it was difficult to estimate the wrong that would be done. It would be a cruel thing to reduce the Army by 10,000 men in order that money might be saved to support some particular fad of the supporters of the Government. After all was said and done, when the saving had been effected we might find ourselves engaged in a war which, in consequence of this reduction, would plunge the country into a far worse mess than they were in at the time of the South African War, and cost us considerably more than the saving effected. He did not think the House would listen for a moment to so miserable an Amendment, which had already received more consideration than it deserved.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said the Motion before the House was to reduce the armaments of this country, and surely hon. Members would agree that there was some necessity for that. What were the facts? During the ten years prior to the last general election, when hon. Gentlemen opposite were in power, the expenditure on armaments in this country actually doubled, a circumstance quite unprecedented in our history. Yet the British Empire, so far as he knew, was just as safe before those ten years of prodigal and extravagant expenditure as now. What Liberal Members were asking was, why could they not go back to the comparatively moderate Estimates of twelve years ago. The House was well aware that one of the brightest ornaments of the Conservative Party, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, now Lord St. Aldwyn, resigned his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer because he was not willing to be a party longer to the continual increase of expenditure which he could not get Parliament to reduce. It was not as though we had been forced into this expenditure by the action of other countries which we were obliged to meet. The fact was that our increase of expenditure on armaments during the period to which he had referred more than equalled that of Italy, France, Germany, and Russia all put together. Such prodigal, extravagant, and insane expenditure was enough to make Mr. Gladstone and the old economists turn in their graves. He had stated what Lord St. Aldwyn thought of it. Since then the question had been referred to the country with the result that the Party opposite suffered an overwhelming defeat. One reason why the people of this country voted as they did was because they were tired of this constant piling up of expenditure on armaments, and of the increase of taxes and debt which it brought with it. The £40,000,000 a year by which our spending on armaments had been increased by the late Government would have given us old-age pensions nearly twice over. The people wished their money to be spent not on preparations for killing men but for blessing them. Radical Members beseeched the Liberal Ministry, therefore, to do something to reduce the wasteful extravagance in which this country had been encouraged by hon. Gentlemen opposite, so that next year they might have many millions to devote to the purposes of social reform. If hon. Gentlemen opposite would not help in that, they would have to help to pay for pensions out of a super tax on large incomes. He hoped they would like putting their hands in their pockets for that money.

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover): I do not propose to follow the last speaker in his excursion into the maze of fiscal reform, but to confine my observations to the debate before the House. The debate to-day is sufficiently interesting without our casting our eyes ahead to see whence the revenue must be drawn in the future. It has been an interesting debate. We have discussed the Motion of the hon. Member for the Tavistock Division for saving money by reducing the Army in order that we may properly maintain the Fleet, and we have also discussed the Artillery Vote raised on this occasion by the hon. Member for Fareham as it was raised in another place only the other day. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War dealt with both these questions in his speech, and in my few observations I propose to reverse the order in which he dealt with them. I hope the hon. Member who moved the reduction as well as the hon. Member who seconded it will not think I am disrespectful to them if I say that the importance of their Motion was much enhanced when they obtained the support of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. They did not, and certainly the hon. Member who spoke last did not, show how in any way the Home army is to be reduced. The right hon. Baronet to-night, as on previous occasions, had a plan of his own to effect economy by reducing the size of the Army. The seconder of the Motion also had a plan, which was that we should, in order to defend India, revert to the plan for India's defence which was in force previous to the Mutiny. The seconder of the Motion advocated a separate long service Army for India. If that was a plan we could adopt I agree it would carry with it a great diminution of the financial burden imposed on the Army. But is it reasonable at this time to consider that plan? The Mutiny might be attributed to that plan, and certainly the Royal Commission which sat after the Mutiny for all time ruled that plan out of the possible alternatives before us. Let hon. Members think of the climate of India. No man improves as a soldier in the ranks after six years, and no battalion or regiment improves after twelve years. It is going back too far to advocate a return to the idea of a separate Army for India. I claim that the verdict of sixty years ago and the experience of the last sixty years is against it. That is the only suggestion that has been made. The right hon. Baronet, though he has not developed his thesis to-night, has a view of his own, which is that we could have a long-service Army for India and the Colonies and a Force at home, but that we need not maintain a balance between the portion of that Army at home and the portion abroad, whether in India or the Colonies.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: My right hon. friend knows I drew a great distinction between the position of the Artillery and Cavalry on the one hand, and the Infantry on the other.

MR. WYNDHAM: And so there would be a long service Army of which more than half, perhaps three-fifths or four-fifths, would be abroad, and less than half, perhaps two-fifths or one-fifth, at home. That is a plan which for my own part I think it sufficient to say will produce no Reserve of Regulars at all. We should be faced with the absence of any Reserve of Regulars; and, if we were faced with the absence of any Reserve of Regulars, no sane man would ask us to discuss the Territorial Army of the right hon. Gentleman. Everybody would say you must have a short service Army in addition to this long service Army, and every man would say that that short service Army ought to train for two years, eighteen months, fifteen months, or a year. Who would say it it ought to train for less than a year? Many would say you could not expect the splendid material in the Volunteers to go into that short service Army, you could not thus outrage the patriotism which animates many of our compatriots. And, taking a reasonable view of the future, the right hon. Baronet's plan would not save money. His long service Army would be an expensive Army though a small one, because every man in it would ultimately have to be a pensioner, thereby creating a large non-effective charge. His short service Army would be more expensive than the Volunteer Force, and he would have to have a Territorial Force as well. That is the argument against the only reasoned suggestion for making economies by cutting down your Regular Army. It is no good to come down to the House and say: "Ten years ago the Army Estimates stood at such and such a figure, and now they stand at a higher figure, whilst in the interim there has been a great deal of waste in the Army." Has there been a great deal of waste? I think it could be proved that there has not been. Ever since the days of Mr. Edward Stanhope, he and his successors have been trying to get better things for the money spent by improving the conditions of service. That leads to an automatic increase which no one, however keen for economy, can resist. When, by State intervention and by passing social legislation, you raise the standard of living of the working man, you cannot allow the soldier to live under conditions which would be put down in civil life. He has to have a good house, better food and clothing, and to have a fair day's amenity for his fair day's work. We rightly insist on that; but it means an automatic increase in the price of your Regular Army. Your Regular Army, Cardwell system or no Cardwell system, is going to cost more than the Regular Army of the same size cost twenty years ago, just as your working man costs more. I do not think I need take up the time of the House any longer on this mere question of a reduction to be made anyhow. If it is made, it must be made somehow, and no plan has yet been brought forward which has stood examination either in the country or by military experts, or by those in this House who inquire into the financial aspects of the problem.

MR. MACKARNESS: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman how his own Government managed to do with 25,000 less than we are asked for now?

MR. WYNDHAM: Before the war we were working on an uphill track. We had succeeded in making the camps reasonable places in which to ask people to live and in adding to the Regular Army what are called, technically, the auxiliary forces. That does not mean what we popularly call the Auxiliary Forces. It means the transport, the Army Service Corps, the Medical Department, and the ammunition columns. It means a number of services which are as necessary as the Regular soldier if the Regular soldier is to be worth the money you pay for him. Prior to that time, which you may put as in the late 'seventies—I am not making a party speech—the country had been content to keep a certain number of Regular soldiers on the books, so to speak, in the full knowledge—at any rate, on the part of the experts—that they were not an Army and could not be made an Army without the expenditure of a great deal more money, and the men were not being treated as they ought to be treated. It began to be felt, after the Franco-German war, that that would not do. It was necessary for any man in a responsible position, for any Cabinet Minister, and not only the Secretary of State for War, to face the necessity of making the Army on the books a real Army. Mr. Cardwell began it by dismissing the long service system and making some additions to these Auxiliary Forces. From his day until now, his successors have marched along that track, and no successors of Mr. Cardwell can retrace those steps. Any successor driven to resignation by being asked to retrace those steps would carry the country with him against his colleagues when the country knew what they were being asked to do and not to do. It was the inspiration of all to limit military expenditure. We all know the Fleet costs us a great deal and is going to cost a great deal more. I believe we are at the very limits of the resources of this country under the existing fiscal system. We all feel we have got to do something, either violent in the direction of direct taxation or something not violent in the direction of broadening the basis of taxation. We are face to face with a financial problem to which no man can shut his eyes. That being so, naturally it is necessary to see whether you can reduce the cost of the Regular Army by £5,000,000 or £10,000,000 a year. If you could, there is not a man on these benches who would not jump at the chance. Those on these benches, however, who have studied the question, know you cannot without sacrificing the work of thirty years and making it a waste of money to spend the money you do spend on an uncompleted Army. Some of those who support the reduction would answer to me that you really do not want an Army at all if you have a big enough Fleet. But you cannot have a war conducted by a Fleet alone. You have to defend the bases of the Fleet, you have to defend the arsenals and liberate the Fleet if it is to begin to fight. And you must be able to strike a blow if you are ever to end a war. You therefore want a Home Army. That leads me, not unnaturally, to the speech of the Secretary of State for War. I received from his speech to-night the clear impression that the size and shape of his Home Army is not solely dictated by the necessity of supplying drafts to the Army abroad; but, if I understood him, you do require in this island an Army of about the size of his expeditionary force. If it could be a matter of agreement between the two sides of the House from one session to another and from one Parliament to another, that we do need about 160,000 or 170,000 men, in the proper proportion of the three arms, and with all the accessories that are necessary in order to liberate the Fleet, then, I think, we should have got a standard for the Army comparable with the two-Power standard of the Navy, and have done a great deal for the efficiency of the Army, and something for economy. In every scheme, that has been about the size of the Home Force. It was so in the time of Mr. Edward Stanhope, it was so in the time of Lord Lansdowne, it was so in the time of Mr. Brodrick, and it was so in the time of the hon. Member for Croydon, and it is so now. It is now called an expeditionary force, but the thing of which we have been talking all this time consists of about the same number of battalions of infantry, regiments of cavalry, and batteries of artillery. If that is so, surely I may conclude that the logic of facts drives every man, whatever his theories, to say that it is a force of about the size and shape you want here in England and Ireland if you ever hope to let the Fleet go when you ought. If you try to do both with the same material, it is very much to the credit of economy; but supposing there were no garrison in India to be reinforced, I say your naval preparations would be an illusion and a snare unless you had at least something between seventy and eighty battalions of infantry, eighteen regiments of cavalry, fifty-four field artillery and howitzer batteries and all their accessories ready at home. You could not liberate the Fleet in the face of popular opinion unless you had between 160,000 and 170,000 trained men here in this island as the tip to the spear, as we call it. That is only your first line. Behind that you require a second line; and, if that number of men, regularly trained, is necessary as the tip to the spear of your whole home defence, so, whatever you have behind it, is artillery the tip to the spear of that Regular Army, and of any Army. Our artillery is the point. It has been said that battles are won by big battalions. They are lost by bad artillery. It is worse than the loss of a battery. It is demoralising to the nation if you cannot fight when you want to fight. Fighting an Army with inferior artillery is like a man with a 12-feet spear fighting a man with an 8-feet spear. The man with the shorter spear cannot fight and has to run away. Therefore, your artillery must be as good as any to which it will be opposed. The right hon. Gentleman in his speech criticised those who were discouraging the Territorial Forces. I do not know whether I was in his mind. I have not discouraged the Territorial Force. I am a member of it, and I am bound to say it would discourage me very much if I thought the guns behind the cavalry regiment in which I was could not compete in range with the guns which would be brought against them. If you want to encourage the Territorial Force give them a stiffening of Regular artillery. You cannot expect men to try to occupy the positions they ought to occupy unless they are backed up by artillery in which they have confidence. Do not let the right hon. Gentleman infer from that that I am opposed to his trying to create Territorial Artillery. I am not opposed to that, but I say he ought not to accompany that experiment, and it is an experiment, by diminishing the efficiency of a single battery of Regular artillery, and he ought to have batteries of Regular artillery to aid this Territorial artillery during its infancy. I take his account of the first line and of the second line—the first line with its Regular artillery, and the second line with no Regular artillery. I understand his plan is based upon command of the sea, and then when war breaks out the first line is mobilised by calling out the Reserve, and the Fleet if need be is liberated. Yes, but how is he going to arrange for these time intervals? Why is everything going to happen in the manner which would best suit his plan. Supposing you have to reinforce the garrison of India before you are at war at all, and that is a contingency. Supposing for Asiatic reasons the Government of India wants 100,000 men, and you have to send really the whole bulk of your expeditionary force, and then war breaks out, your whole plan crumbles. These time intervals cease to exist. You would not be able to liberate the Fleet, and yet under those circumstances the power of liberating the Fleet might not only give the victory in war, but might prevent the war happening at all. The fact that your Fleet was on your shores might pacify the country, but would not otherwise occur if you were really free. We have to contemplate more contingencies than the right hon. Gentleman has taken into account. He may say that if you contemplate every contingency you kill the country by ruining its finances. We do not ask him to contemplate every contingency, but we do ask him to contemplate this fact—it is a fact and not a speculation—that if the contingencies are other and greater than those which he has contemplated, the safety of the whole position will depend upon there being a stiffening of Regular artillery for his Territorial Force. That is why the artillery is the point of the whole of this discussion. Do not reduce the Regular artillery. Keep up the number of batteries which are thought to be needed. Upon that point I should like more courteously to establish what I endeavoured to establish by way of interruption when the right hon. Gentleman was speaking. He cited Lord Midleton in favour of Territorial artillery. I am not attacking Territorial artillery. My case is that you want Regular artillery with the Territorial artillery. And what did he quote from Lord Midleton? He quoted the opinion that you might have a third of Territorial artillery in your second three Army Corps. You will, therefore, have nothing but Regular artillery in your first three Army Corps. That is precisely the plan of the right hon. Gentleman. Then Lord Midleton's idea of a second line was one formed both of Regulars, and of what we will call the Territorial Forces. For the artillery of that second line he said he wanted two-thirds Regular, and one-third Territorial. That is to say, he said he wanted ninety batteries, to put it in figures, and the right hon. Gentleman says he wants fifty-four. Which is right? We say that to have fifty-four batteries alone as the bare complement for your expeditionary force or your home force is necessary to liberate the Fleet is a dangerous course to pursue. You want a margin over that. Lord Midleton asked for thirty-six batteries as a margin. You have thirty-three and you are not using them. You are turning them away from the first line and devoting them to training the second line. That we think to be a fundamental error of judgment. I am not putting the case that the Territorial artillery is a mistake, but that you ought not to divert these thirty-three batteries of Regular artillery form the purpose which they are fitted to fulfil. The right hon. Gentleman really has not met that point. He claims that he has made the artillery more efficient because he can now mobilise forty-two batteries. I hope he will not continue to use that argument. Let us compare plan with plan. Our plan was that there should be fifty-four batteries of field artillery without howitzers. That is the right hon. Gentleman's plan, and he maintains that he has achieved something remarkable by converting thirty-three batteries of field artillery, which are now existing, into training schools in order to make an ammunition column. You might as well take a design for a house of three storeys, and because you have not the fittings for the top storey, build a house of two storeys and a cottage and say you have effected a great economy. It is not an economy. It does not add to the artillery power of the Army in the least. The right hon. Gentleman must know that by other methods than those which he intends to pursue, it was the intention of his predecessor to get ammunition columns.

Mr. HALDANE: How? You used batteries to train during the war, and you would have had to use them to train even if you had carried out your plan.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Nobody is prepared to assert that we had as much artillery ready before the war as the war demanded. That is not really the question. The question is that after the war when we had been taught in the bitter school of experience we said: "You want ninety batteries of artillery," and the right hon. Gentleman says: "You do not. You want fifty-four," and he says: "Do not argue with me in that way, because I have enabled you to send out to war with ammunition columns far greater than was previously necessary, a larger number of batteries than you could at the beginning of the war." That is not a fair issue. If the right hon. Gentleman says he has not money enough to pay for it, and cannot get it we shall understand it, but if he says it is wrong to aim at the number of batteries you require, and right to have fewer than you require, because you can get your ammunition columns without spending more money he is really misleading the House altogether. He has got to tell the House whether it is wise only to have a Regular Field Artillery for his expeditionary force. He came down with a number of documents from a number of men whose opinion we shall be the first to respect, but as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, not one of these witnesses whom he called expressed his opinion upon this point. The right hon. Gentleman being a lawyer knew very well how to put the question to the soldiers. His main question was, "Taking the constitution of a second line to be trained for six months, can you get an efficient Territorial Artillery?" That begs the whole question, and assumes all we are criticising. It assumes that you have to have his plan, and that having got his plan you are always going to have six months law to prepare the Territorial Force. If I had been asked that, and told I was to have no other artillery than he provides I should have said it was of more value than nothing at all. That is all Sir John French and the other experts have said. They said, to quote Sir John French's words—

> "All soldiers would like the best artillery. This is the only artillery you are going to give us and therefore we like that."

It hangs together like a proposition of Euclid, but it does not touch the point which we make, and must continue to make, that it is dangerous now, after the war, to reduce your plan for Regular artillery to a limit which was proved to be utterly insufficient by the experience of the war. It does not touch the point that even if you get six months, you ought to stiffen your Territorial Force with Regular artillery, or the point which we and Sir John French have made that perhaps you will not get your six months at all. And, therefore, we must now, before things go any further, beg him not to take refuge in dialectical points about the provision of ammunition columns, but think in his own mind whether or not it is wise to revert to the plan for Regular artillery which prevailed before the war, to take his chance of a six months respite, and to divert thirty-three batteries of Regular artillery now in existence to purposes which could be performed in other ways, and to divert them for purposes which can only be achieved in the opinion of every military expert by artillery which has been regularly trained.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he wished to say a few words in support of the Motion of his hon. friend for reducing the Army. He could never support any reduction of the Navy beyond the point which the Admiralty considered was necessary. He regarded the Navy as absolutely vital to this country, and he supported the reduction of the Army because he had grave fears that, unless they reduced expenditure on the Army, they would be forced to cut down the Navy. He was only afraid that a few years hence they might be forced by international necessities to increase the Navy and he did not see where the money was to come from, unless they reduced the expenditure upon the force which was only of secondary importance to this country. Let the House consider for a moment what the Army was costing. Unfortunately, the real facts in regard to the cost of the Army were concealed by the form in which the Estimates were presented. The whole British Army was the Army in this country and the Army in India, including the native forces. That whole Army cost, not the sum in the Estimates, but about £52,500,000. The French Army cost £32,000,000, the German Army £37,000,000, and the Russian Army, £40,000,000. While we did not pretend to be a great military Power, we were spending more on our Army than any one of these Continental nations. That was a very serious fact indeed. This country could not be supremely strong both on sea and land. We were paying £52,000,000 a year for an Army which was confessedly far inferior to the much cheaper Armies of Continental Powers. The difference in the cost of foreign Armies and ours was not accounted for wholly by the fact that they had conscription. There must be something fundamentally wrong, when we were spending £52,000,000 on our Army whilst Russia was only spending £40,000,000. This country virtually had only one frontier to defend, namely, the North West frontier. How many frontiers had Russia to defend? She had frontiers against Japan, China, India, Persia, Turkey, Roumania, Austria, Germany and Sweden, and she defended all those frontiers with an Army expenditure less than four fifths of our expenditure for the defence of one frontier. That seemed to him a very serious point and he thought it was the duty of any Government to try and cut down our enormous expenditure. He had been informed by the Secretary of State for War that the cost of the British garrison in Egypt was £620,000, of which the Egyptian Government contributed only £150,000. That was an unjust arrangement. Our occupation of Egypt, which depended upon the presence of British troops, had enormously increased the wealth and happiness of the Egyptian people. Egypt ought to pay for those troops. Why should Egypt be treated differently from India? A point usually lost sight of, was the excessive pay of the common soldier as compared with the pay obtainable by civilians of the same class. In comparison with the work he did, and in comparison with the pay of the class from which he was usually drawn, the common soldier was the best paid man in the United Kingdom. The ordinary private soldier of twenty years of age was fed and clothed, and even had amusements provided for him, and then in addition he got 12s. a week pocket money. He had opportunities in the service that were denied to men in civil life. If he married, he got a house and rations and 14s. a week: his pay was regular no matter whether the weather or trade was bad. If he served on for twenty years he would then get a pension of 7s. a week. There were many people belonging to the same class as that from which the common soldier was drawn who never got more than 15s. a week all their lives, and he thought the House would agree that the private soldier was extremely well paid and yet we did not get the men we wanted. He agreed that the linked battalion system was the best suited to our purposes, but why not link three battalions together instead of only two, then two battalions could be abroad to one at home. The home battalion would of course have to be large, but for the purposes of training that would be an advantage. This experiment might be tried slowly. During the recess, the Secretary for War made the extraordinary statement that the time might come when we could no longer rely upon the Navy, and that we would have to rely upon our Home Forces. That seemed to him to be a very dangerous doctrine indeed, for it ignored altogether the fact that the Navy had a double duty to perform. It had not only to defend our shores from invasion, but also our commerce from capture at sea. Even the right hon. Gentleman's Territorial Army could not perform the function of protecting our commerce upon the sea. Economy was not served by building up a Territorial Army instead of strengthening the Navy. The annual cost of the most modern battleship, allowing for everything, was less than £250,000. The Territorial Army would cost £3,000,000—the equivalent of twelve first-class batteships in full commission. It was patent that our strength in the world would be enormously greater with twelve more battleships than with a Territorial Army, which must of necessity be ill-trained. Modern industrial conditions made it impossible to give Volunteers an efficient military training. We must rely on a professional Army in this country. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman had realised the social and industrial changes that had taken place, not only in this country, but in the whole world during the past 100 years. When the majority of mankind were occupied in agricultural pursuits it was comparatively easy to go away a bit and fight, but that was not an easy thing when men were working in mills or modern workshops. They could not take men out of a mill without disarranging the whole industrial organisation. That was the fundamental difference between an industrial and an agricultural community, and it was hopeless to continue to ignore that fact. Personally, he did not believe that they could ever rely to any appreciable extent upon a Terriorial Army. He went so far as to say that they ought never to attempt to build up an exclusively Home Service Army, for they only wanted soldiers who were prepared to fight abroad. The Leader of the Opposition had disposed of the only excuse for a Home Service Army, namely, the hypothesis that this country, while engaged with one enemy, might be attacked by another. The answer to that hypothesis was that the attack might come so soon that the Home Service Army would not have time for the training which it would admittedly require. Was it likely that the Territorial Army could take the field against the picked troops that would be sent over to fight against us? If an enemy invaded this country they would choose the best men, equipped with the best weapons. Therefore he had been driven to the conclusion that this country must rely exclusively upon its Navy and upon a professional Army. The conditions of modern life compelled us to differentiate, specialise, and professionalise. Our necessities were primarily a Navy absolutely supreme which would make invasion impossible and a professional Army backed by a strong Reserve ready to strike abroad.

MR. LUTTRELL said there had been a very full discussion of the subject, and hon. Members who did not speak when the Vote was in Committee had now had an opportunity of stating their views. He, therefore, asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Leave to withdraw being refused,

Amendment put, and negatived.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [12TH MARCH] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £9,422,000, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expense of the Pay, etc., of his Majesty's Army (including Army Reserve) at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,743,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Rewards; Half-Pay; Retired Pay; Widows' Pensions; and other Non-Effective Charges for Officers, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,782,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals; of Out-Pensions; Rewards for Distinguished Services; Widows' Pensions; and other Non-Effective Charges for Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £167,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Civil Superannuation, Compensation, Compassionate Allowances and Gratuities, and of Payments under the Workmen's Compensation Act, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

First Resolution:—

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. ASHLEY called attention to what he described as the miserably inadequate pay of the regimental officers and non-commissioned officers who constituted the backbone of the Regular Army. These were the men who did the real training and fitted the regiments and battalions for war. In the last fifty or sixty years the regimental officer had received practically no increase of pay whatever. He thought the pay of the private soldier compared most favourably with the wages received by his class in civil life, though he thought that, in order to attract recruits, the State should undertake to give a preference to the old soldier in the distribution of the civil employment it might have to give at the end of his service. At present the soldier felt that after he had served three or seven years he had nothing certain to look forward to. If the State would lay down the principle that, other things being equal, preference would be given to the old soldier, it would pay the State ten times over, because a better class of men would be attracted to the Army. As to the regimental officer, a young man of nineteen or twenty got £95 a year, and he did not think that was much to give him in view of his education and the examinations he had to pass. The officer afterwards became a lieutenant with £118 a year, at which pay he remained until he was twenty-eight or twenty-nine, when he became a captain with £208 a year. By that time he had probably married and had a wife and family to provide for, and appearances to keep up. He would ask the House whether they considered that an adequate pay. When he was forty or forty-five he might become a lieutenant-colonel with £420 a year. Perhaps the Secretary of State for War might agree with the President of the Local Government Board that no man should have more than £500 a year, but he thought it was absurdly inadequate pay for a man of forty or forty-five who had served twenty years at his profession. The result was that the good men they ought to have as regimental officer did not remain with their regiments. They tried to get into the Egyptian Army, or to get appointments on the West Coast of Africa, or elsewhere, where they would get higher rates of pay. They did not do the work they were primarily enlisted to do. That was an important point which ought to be borne in mind. The present pay absolutely debarred men without money from going into the Army at all. Men did not now go into the Army as officers as they used to do, and that was largely because the pay was inadequate. They said that if they were to treat the Army as a serious profession they were entitled to the pay of a serious profession.

MR. HALDANE: I have a great deal of sympathy with what the hon. Member for Blackpool has said about the pay of the officer. But there is this to be considered. I doubt whether the average pay of a general officer in the Army when he gets to the age of forty or forty-five does not compare very well with that of the average barrister. [AN HON. MEMBER: Oh!] I am speaking of the average.

MR. ASHLEY pointed out that there was not the same danger attaching to the legal as to the military profession.

MR. HALDANE: I do know that; there is at the Bar the danger of starvation, and the same may be said of other professions. It should be remembered that the pay of the higher branches of the Army is very good, and that there are great positions to be attained, for the chance of which people go into the Army. But a study of the Estimates will show that an endeavour is made, in respect of travelling expenses and other items, to improve the position of the officers, and that has been the policy of successive Governments. I cannot hold out the hope of our making any very material increase of the pay of the officer until the country takes a different view on the subject, but still something has been done. I hope we may now get this Vote, as we have also got to get the Navy Vote through in order to introduce the Army Annual Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said the comparison of the position of an Army officer with that of a barrister was hardly a good one. The right hon. Gentleman said that the income of the average barrister was small, but he would point out that the barrister who did not earn fees was not doing any work. [AN HON. MEMBER: He devils for others.] The barrister for whom he devilled paid him. If they could get private soldiers on the three and seven years system for the Army these men should not be turned adrift without some opportunity of obtaining other occupations. He thought that the State which secured their services during the years which would have enabled them to learn a trade should provide them with occupation after they left the colours, when there happened to be any vacancies in State employment. With regard to the officers, he did not quite agree with his hon. friend. To a certain extent, he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that if one could get a "devil" or an officer for nothing, why should one give him anything more? His hon. friend had said that we were short of 8,000 officers, and that we could not get proper men as officers at the present rates of pay. But did his hon. friend suppose that if the subaltern's pay was increased from £90 to £120 they would get any more men, or that that would make any appreciable difference in their manner of living? The subaltern would still require an allowance from his father, and no more officers would be obtained than at present. We had increased the pay of the private soldier, but we had not got any more men. He believed that if the scale of soldiers' pay had been left as it was, there would have been as many recruits to the Army as now, and a very considerable expense would have been saved to the nation. Hon. Gentlemen opposite were against spending money on the Army, and if the pay of officers was raised that would be taken as an excuse for reducing the Vote of men for the Army not by 10,000 men only, but by many more. He only wished that the right hon. Gentleman had said straight out that the State could not afford to give more pay. He hoped that his hon. friend would not press this matter, because it would not do any good, and might prevent them from obtaining the requisite number of men for the Army.

SIR H. CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said that he happened to occupy the office of Chairman of the Qualifying Board for the examination of officers, and he knew that it was becoming more difficult to get the best candidates for the Army from the Universities. He knew that the existing rates of pay limited the choice to those whose fathers could afford them a large allowance as officers in the Army. He was of opinion that a comparatively slight increase of pay would have a stimulating effect in drawing men from every class of the community to the Army from turning to more lucrative professions.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he quite agreed with the last speaker in regard to a slight increase of pay inducing many competent men to join the Army as officers; but at the same time the large shortage of officers at present was due to other causes than had been suggested. The difficulty of obtaining officers was created by the examinations which the young men had to undergo. It was not so much the question of pay but the extraordinary examinations that deterred them. There were boys in our public schools fit in every way to be officers as well as being physically fit and with the knowledge that most young Englishmen possessed of manly sport and all that young fellows were required to do in time of war. If a number of petty restrictions were removed, apart from any question of an extra £30 or £40, the Government would have a very much larger number of officers available. Anyone acquainted with the examinations would, he thought, admit that they were prohibitive in many cases, and prevented the cream of the really manly school boys from joining the Army. What prevented them from joining, although they were yearning to do so, was the fact that they would have to master foreign languages and some of the higher mathematics. This knowledge might, as they all knew, be necessary in some of the higher branches of the Army, but for Infantry of the Line or ordinary regimental duty it was not needed. It was only wanted in cases where in after-life the officers had gone to the Staff College or got into prominent positions. If the Secretary for War would only use his great ability to make it more easy for some of these young fellows to get into the Army he would not only alleviate their position, but perhaps save some of the money which the Radicals were so anxious to save on the Army, Navy, or any other Imperial object.

Question put, and agreed to.

Remaining Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [9th March] REPORT.

Resolution reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

"That 128,000 officers, seamen, and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, including 18,463 Royal Marines."

Resolution agreed to.

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Secretary Haldane, Mr. Edmund Robertson, and Mr. Buchanan, do prepare and bring it in.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

"To provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. Bill [167.]

SUPPLY [10th March] REPORT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question—

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

1. "That a sum not exceeding £7,129,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Wages, etc., to Officers, Seamen, and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Question again proposed.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said he wished to call attention to the system of training naval officers, and especially the training of the engineer staff, but if it was convenient to the House he was willing to defer it till a later stage. Perhaps the Secretary to the Admiralty would take Vote 5 at an early day, and he could then bring the matter forward.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I think it would be most convenient to take the discussion on Vote 5 at an early day, and I will undertake that it shall be placed first on the Paper. I hope that will be satisfactory to the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. BARNES: Quite, and I will defer the observations I desire to make until that occasion.

Sir F. BANBURY said that in the Committee there were some effective speeches made on the question of the reduction of the Coastguard, but no satisfactory assurance was obtained from the Admiralty that they intended to alter their policy with regard to the decrease of the Coastguard. Last year the number of the Coastguard was 3,903. This year it is 3,540. Nobody would deny that the Coastguard were excellent men and did their work in the best possible way, and that it would be difficult to replace them. After all they numbered under 4,000 last year, and he could not see the necessity for this insane desire to make a small saving by this reduction. In fact, he did not know what the saving came to.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Nothing.

Sir F. BANBURY said that under those circumstances he failed to see the reason for it. He had not a very high opinion of the administrative ability of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite before, but he had still less when he found this fine body of men were being reduced for no object whatever. He rose for the purpose of opposing this reduction, and he hoped before it was sanctioned good reason would be given for it.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON reminded the hon. Baronet that he fully explained in Committee the policy of the Admiralty on this matter. The reductions, which were being effected by natural wastage, would take place only on those stations where the men were serving no purpose—naval, life-saving, or rocket apparatus. There would be no financial saving, inasmuch as the places of these men, who were semi-active, would be taken by men on the active service list. The First Lord of the Admiralty had promised in another place to make public the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the coastguard. The Admiralty would not adopt the Report—they were pursuing a totally different policy on this question—but it had been thought well that it should be made public.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said that in the previous debate on this question it was stated that some of the smaller stations would be closed; that the cottages would be let and that the men would be replaced by naval men. What he wished to know was, was the patrolling of the coast going to be performed as it used to be by men who on previous occasions had proved most useful? He had known cases where people who had got into difficulties had been rescued simply becaue they had been seen when these men were patrolling the coast in the course of their duty. If the coast was to be patrolled as formerly, how was the patrol to be arranged when these stations were closed?

Question put, and agreed to.

Sir F. Banbury.

WAYS AND MEANS [17TH MARCH] REPORT.

Second Resolution considered, and agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Gentlemen appointed to bring in a Bill upon the Resolution reported from the Committee of Ways and Means on the 18th day of this instant March, and then agreed to by the House, that they do make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

"To apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and eight and one thousand nine hundred and nine," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next.

DEBTORS (IMPRISONMENT).

Ordered, that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the existing Law relating to the Imprisonment of Debtors, and to report whether any Amendments are desirable.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Stopford Brooke, Mr. Byles, Mr. Charles Craig, Mr. Delany, Mr. Robert Duncan, Mr. Ferens, Mr. George Gibbs, Mr. Hodge, Mr. Keswick, Sir Charles M'Laren, Mr. John Phillips, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Rendall, Mr. Wadsworth and Mr. Wills.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 20th March, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stockport Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Lincoln Corporation Bill; Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

BUILDING FEUS AND LEASES (SCOTLAND).

Petition from Dalziel, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Dalziel; and Renfrew; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS)(No. 2) BILL.

Petition from London and other places, against; to lie upon the Table.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND BILL.)

Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Larne; and Omagh; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN)

Petitions for legislation: From Anerley; and Stoke Newington and Clapton; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Exeter; Mexboro'; and Parkgate: to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Shelf, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHTS ON VEHICLES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Two Petitions from Cullen, for prevention; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RIGHTS OF WAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CONGESTION IN IRELAND (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented of Tenth Report of the Commissioners, with Appendix (Minutes of Evidence taken in Counties Galway and Roscommon, from 18th September to 4th October 1907) and Documents relating thereto [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MEDICAL COUNCIL.

Accounts presented for 1907 of the General Medical Council and Branch Councils, and of the Dental Registration Fund [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Accounts presented for the year 1907, with an Account of extraordinary Works executed other than the general Repairs for the same period [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

IRISH LAND PURCHASE FINANCE (DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE).

Copy presented of Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into Irish Land Purchase Finance in connection with the provision of Funds required for the purposes of the Irish Land Act [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

WINES IMPORTED.

Return presented relative thereto [ordered 12th March; *Sir Frederick Banbury*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 94.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Prosecutions for Illegal Trawling.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland, if he will state how many prosecutions for illegal trawling were instituted during the year ending 31st December, 1907, on information given by the commander of each Fishery Board cruiser, indicating the cases in which penalties were imposed and the cases in which the offenders elected to go to prison.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) Prosecutions followed upon reports of contraventions by commanders of fishery cruisers as follows:—

Cruisers.	Foreign Trawlers.	British Trawlers.
"Brenda" -	17	1
"Freya" - -	64	3
"Minna" -	3	1
"Vigilant" -	4	0
H.M.S. "Ringdove" - -	35	0
	123	5

giving a total of 128 contraventions reported. In respect of 101 of these contraventions convictions were obtained with the following further results, viz.—For twenty-seven contraventions the offenders went to prison. For forty-two the offenders paid fines. For twenty-one the offenders went to prison for part of the time, but were released on payment of part of fine. For three the offenders were admonished. For three sentence not enforced. For five two parties were convicted; one went to prison, the other paid fine. Total 101 contraventions for which convictions obtained.

Cost of Salving the "Montagu."

MR. GRETTON (Rutland): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what was the cost to Naval Votes of the attempt to salve the "Montagu" and her stores, and what was the value of the stores salved; and whether any other sums were realised besides the sale of the vessel for £4,250.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The total cost to Navy Votes was £85,798. The value of the stores salved was £108,752. No other sum was realised beyond the £4,250 for which the vessel was sold.

Strengthening the Coastguard Service.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether in consideration of the official statement that the Coastguard Service is for the present to remain on the same footing and conditions as have recently prevailed, pending a renewed inquiry, the Admiralty will consider the desirability of recommending that all stations which only have a staff of six or less should be brought up to their full strength until some final decision is arrived at as to what is to be the future of the Coastguard Service.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) I must refer the hon. Gentleman to my statement in the House on 3rd March, in which I said that there was a recognised redundancy both of men and stations, and that certain necessary reductions, which had been postponed last year, must be effected now. I am not prepared to go beyond that statement in the direction indicated in the Question.

Religious Instruction in London County Council Training Colleges.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Education, what is the nature of the religious instruction given in the London County Council training colleges.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I understand that the London County Council do not provide religious instruction in their training colleges.

Dismissal of Married School Teachers at Aberdare.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the President of the Board of Education, whether the Aberdare education authority has power to require the female married teachers in its employ to resign in cases where such teachers were employed by the late school board of the district, and were taken over in September, 1903, by the Education Committee on their adoption of Part III of the Act of 1902; and how such dismissal will affect teachers who have annually contributed towards the superannuation fund attainable at the age of sixty-five, and particularly teachers who have not completed half the number of years of recorded service specified in the Act of 1898.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Yes, Sir; teachers employed in council schools hold office during the pleasure of the local education authority (Section 35 of The Elementary Education Act, 1870) irrespective of whether they were appointed by that authority or by their predecessors, the school board. Teachers are entitled to the annuity purchasable by their contributions to the deferred annuity fund, even if they have not satisfied the conditions required for a superannuation allowance; those teachers whose length of service does not qualify them for a superannuation allowance on attaining the age of sixty-five will, if they desire to secure one, be under the necessity of obtaining posts elsewhere.

Constitution of the Irish Department of Agriculture.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland is it the intention of the Government to introduce any legislation amending the constitution and working of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland, or do they intend to take into consideration the recommendations in the Minority Report of Mr. Micks.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is not intended to introduce legislation on this subject at present.

The Brussels International Conference.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can inform the House as to the scope of an International Conference to be held at Brussels next month, with reference to the arms and ammunition clauses of the Brussels General Act of 1892; and whether opportunity will be afforded for consideration by the Conference of alleged violations of these clauses in the Congo State, as, for example, set forth in Africa, No. 1, of the present year.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The object of the International Conference which is to meet at Brussels next month, and at which His Majesty's Government will be represented, is to revise, with a view to making them more stringent, those articles of the Brussels Act which refer to the trade in arms and ammunition in Africa. It is to be presumed that the Conference will have ample opportunity of considering any information bearing upon the subject which points to the need for closer supervision.

Companies Consolidation Bill.

MR. HYDE (Wednesbury): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether it is the intention of the Government to re-introduce this session a Companies Consolidation Bill to consolidate The Companies Act, 1862, and the Acts amending it.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Since last Session the Companies Acts Consolidation Bill, which was then introduced, has undergone careful revision, and the provisions of the Act of last year have been incorporated in it. It is the intention of the Government to introduce this Bill at an early date.

Additional Grants to Scottish County Education Committees.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is intended to make any additional grants to county education committees in Scotland this year; and whether he proposes to issue a minute on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I have to refer the hon. Member to Section II. (B) of the Minute of 25th February, which is at present on the Table, and from which he will see that the sum allocated to county committees from the general aid grant is being increased from £40,000 to £60,000.

The Tugs "Grappler" and "Robust."

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the tugs "Grappler" and "Robust" are intended solely for towing purposes; if not, for what other purposes it is intended to use them; and whether they are being fitted with fire extinguishing or salvage appliances.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) These tugs are intended primarily for towing purposes, but are fitted so that they can be used for light mooring work to assist in salvage operations, and for carrying large bodies of men. Both are fitted with fire extinguishing and salvage pumps.

Pay of Writers in the Naval Ordnance Department.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what are the rates of pay of the various grades of writers in the Naval Ordnance Department; whether these writers are allowed to present petitions in cases of grievance; whether these rates of pay are to be increased, and to what extent; and what are the conditions as to sick pay and sick leave applying to this branch of the service.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The rates of pay are shown at Page 122 of the Navy Estimates, 1908–9. Petitions have been recently received from some of the writers, and there is nothing to prevent them from sending in petitions in the usual manner. The new rates of pay were promulgated in April last, and I cannot hold out any hope of their being increased. The regulations in regard to leave are the same as those obtaining in the dockyards, and are as follows—

Rank.	Ordinary leave on full pay.	Sick leave on full pay.	Sick leave on half pay.
	Days.	Days.	Days.
Hired writers, first grade	15*	15*	15*
Hired writers, second grade, and boy writers	1†	1†	1†

* Per annum.
† For every 26 days actually employed in each year.

Applications for Orders under The Public Health Act, 1907.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Local Government Board how many sanitary authorities have applied for orders under the Public Health Act, 1907; and whether orders have been issued in response to such applications.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns*) I have received communications from about 200 sanitary authorities who are desirous that provisions of the Act should be put in force in their districts, and these are receiving attention. Orders have not at present been issued. Indeed, the cases have not generally reached the stage of formal applications for orders. Certain preliminary proceedings have first to be taken.

Medical Attendance for West Ham Workhouse Officials.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the action of the West

Ham Board of Guardians in trying to compel one of their medical officers to give free medical attendance to the officials of the workhouse; whether he is aware that one of the relieving officers has given to workhouse officers the ordinary order to obtain medical attendance; whether the issue of such orders is in accordance with the rules of the Local Government Board; and whether he has any authority to deal with the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am aware that an allegation to the effect stated has been made, and I am causing the matter to be investigated.

Efficiency of the Portarlington Schools.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state how many schools in the Portarlington circuit have had their mark of proficiency reduced during the years 1906 and 1907 since the present senior inspector took charge.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they do not think it desirable in the interests of the efficient inspection of their schools, to give the information asked for.

Irish National Schools Inspection.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, taking into consideration the irregular attendance of children attending the Irish national schools and the uncertainty of the date of annual inspection, he will recommend the Commissioners of Irish National Education to issue instructions to their inspectors to give reasonable notice to the teachers of the date of such inspection, as was done in 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education do not consider it desirable to alter the present rule relating to inspection, which is as follows: The inspectors should give due notice of their intended visits when they propose to make formal inspections. When an inspector visits a school, not for a formal inspection but with the intention of spending a considerable time therein, he should, when practicable, cause the manager to be notified of his presence. If the manager resides at such a distance that this course would present difficulty, he should receive notification of the proposed visit from the inspector by post on the morning of the visit.

Irish School Inspections—Confidential Reports.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in a case a confidential Report, injurious to either the private or the professional character of a teacher, is sent to the Board of Irish National Education by the manager or the inspector, he will, before any action is taken, cause a public inquiry to be held, in order that the teacher may have an opportunity of defending either himself or herself against such a report.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they cannot undertake to order public inquiries in the class of cases referred to in the Question. The Commissioners have, with the approval of the Lord-Lieutenant, recently made the following regulations which they consider will safeguard the legitimate interests of national school teachers:—Teachers who have declined in efficiency or who have conducted themselves improperly are dealt with as the Commissioners determine. Before serious penal action is taken against a teacher he is afforded an opportunity of forwarding to the Commissioners any statement he may desire to submit in his defence. In no case is a teacher dismissed for inefficiency before he has had ample opportunity of remedying the defects in his teaching which have been reported by the inspectors. In no case is a teacher dismissed for inefficiency on the reports of a single inspector. Before recognition is finally withdrawn his work is tested by means of a thorough inspection of the school as a whole, and an examination of all the standards. This inspection is conducted by one of the senior or chief inspectors, and in the presence of one of the Commissioners if they think it desirable. Should it appear necessary to dismiss a teacher for inefficiency, a formal statement of the grounds on which it is proposed to take action is furnished directly to the teacher. Any representations or explanations which he may submit in his own behalf are carefully considered by the Commissioners before final action is taken. Should a teacher have any well-grounded cause of complaint against the manager or the inspector, he may submit his case in writing to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Sale of the Rockfield Estate, County Mayo.

MR. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the terms and conditions upon which the sale of the Rockfield portion of the estate of Cecil Nolan-Ferrall, in the County of Mayo, was sold to the Congested Districts Board; and whether the Board is now proposing to take from some of the tenants on the property portion of their holdings for the purpose of increasing the holdings of sub-tenants on the same property.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Congested Districts Board purchased the entire Nolan-Ferrall estate, including the Rockfield section, at a bulk sum subject to existing tenancies. In the case of one of the tenants of a large holding the Board made a proposal that about three acres of the holding should be given for the purpose of enlarging the small holding of a sub-tenant, the tenant's rent to be proportionately reduced. The tenant, however, declined to entertain that proposal, as also a subsequent proposal made by the Board that six acres of unreclaimed cut-away bog should be given for a like purpose.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Seaverns; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Yoxall.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill): Mr. Secretary Gladstone and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Local Authorities (Admission of the Press(Bill): Mr. Burns and Dr. Macnamara.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. HOGAN (Tipperary, N.): The Bill to which I ask the House to give a Second Reading to-day deals with a subject of immense importance to Ireland and of the greatest possible urgency. It is high time that Ireland had some consideration and attention given by Parliament to its housing problem. No one who understands the cities and towns of Ireland and the conditions under which the working classes and the poorer classes live in them will deem it an exaggeration when I say that a state of things exists there which it would be a crime to allow to continue any longer. Let this House pause for a moment in its warfare of parties and endeavour to do some material good to Ireland by passing this measure. It is purely a domestic problem, and cannot in any circumstances jeopardise the Union or touch upon the higher flights of politics, except that it will tend to better the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland. I cannot imagine that any Member of Parliament desires to throw any obstacle in the way of bettering the condition of the Irish people and by so doing perhaps lessening the volume of discontent in my country. I am quite aware and my colleagues of the Irish Party are quite aware that the problem is a big one and will take considerable time to solve. But a beginning must be made and the sooner the better. The principal thing to secure is that when we begin we shall not set about the work in a peddling fashion, but shall take means to enable the local authorities to do something on a comprehensive scale within the next few years so as to remove one of the worst blots on our civilisation. I am usually a silent member of this House, representing an innocent and agricultural constituency; even the hon. Members from Ulster would acknowledge this. My hon. and learned friend who will second the Motion I make will explain in detail the exact proposals of the Bill. It is his business to talk, and he can do it well. It is my business to vote, and I can do that as well as anyone in this House. But, speaking as the representative of North Tipperary, which is so typical of the greater part of Ireland in so many of its conditions, I have no hesitation in saying that if this Bill passes it will in the next ten years change the face of a great part of most of the cities and towns of Ireland, and so bring advantages to every class of the community in that country. The bettering of the condition of the people in Ireland is desired for its own sake by those who love Ireland, whilst even our opponents on other questions should be the first to realise that the objects sought by this Bill are those which should receive their abundant support. I could give to the House many samples and illustrations of what I see myself. I will only trouble you with one which I saw last January in a town not far from where I live. It was a very wet day and walking along one of the ordinary streets I saw a poor old man sitting by a scanty fire in his own house and he had to have an umbrella up to do that which the roof ought to have been doing for him. With these few observations I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill now before the House.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): I rise to second the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill. My hon. friend who has just sat down said that the subject with which the Bill deals was one of the greatest urgency. It is hardly necessary to say anything in proof of that allegation, for, in truth, everyone admits it. It was admitted by the late Government, when the then Chief Secretary for Ireland, the Member for Dover, promised legislation at an early date regarding the housing question in Irish cities and towns. But if proof were needed, it is to be had in abundance. I assume, of course, that slums are bad things and that proper habitations are necessary for the poorer classes of the community as well as for those higher in the social scale. Starting with that assumption one is appalled by the state of the housing accommodation for the working classes in nearly all the cities and towns of Ireland. If I take the state of things in Dublin as an illustration, I do so not because forty or fifty other urban districts would not afford striking illustrations also, but because the magnitude of the blot on the capital city of Ireland amounts in itself to a national scandal. I find from a paper read in 1903 by Sir Robert Matheson, the Registrar-General for Ireland, that there were then 21,747 families out of 59,263 families, or 36·70 per cent., living in one-room tenements. Surely it is not necessary to go further to justify immediate legislation on this subject. But, in view of the character of our proposals, it may be well to see how the Irish case stands in comparison with the case of England and Scotland. Much has been said, and I have no doubt with perfect truth, about the need for further legislation to meet the case of Great Britain. But a few figures will show that, bad as is the state of things in some of the towns of Great Britain, it is Elysium itself in comparison with what meets the eye in Ireland, and especially in Dublin. Take the number of one-room tenements having five or more occupants each in every 100 tenements of all classes. According to Sir Robert Matheson—for it is to his courtesy I am indebted for these figures, which may, therefore, be absolutely relied upon—Manchester has 0·04 such tenements; Liverpool, 0·22; London, 0·57; Edinburgh, 1·80; Glasgow, 4·28; and Dublin, 8·69. In face of such figures as those, while I do not in the least desire to minimise the case of Great Britain for better housing accommodation for its workers, I shall not be going too far when I say that there is no urgency about it when you compare it with that of Ireland. As to the moral evils resulting from the state of things I have described, I am on common ground with everyone, but if I were to refer to any testimony on the point I would direct the attention of the Chief Secretary in particular to the remarkable deliverances which the Recorder of Dublin recently thought it his duty to deliver from the bench upon this point. It will be sufficient to say that from the misery and squalor of those abodes spring nearly all the vice and nearly all the crime in the urban centres of Ireland, which, nevertheless, we are proud to be able to say are amongst the most peaceable and orderly communities of the kind in the whole world. What about the physical evils? We hear a good deal nowadays—and not a word too much—about the ravages of consumption, and the necessity of fighting that terrible disease with appliances of the most approved sort, no matter how costly. But what earthly use is it to try to stamp out consumption by building sanatoria when you have those thousands of dens breeding tuberculosis at the same time? It would be folly not to admit that something has been done by legislation to mitigate this great social evil. The Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 especially was a considerable step in advance, and advantage has been taken of that Act by most, if not by all, the Irish municipalities. In Dublin especially the corporation has done very considerable work in clearing slum areas and replacing the rookeries with which they were studded by comfortable dwellings. But, after all, only the fringe of the difficulty has been touched both in Dublin and the provincial towns. From a Return granted on the Motion of my hon. friend the Member for East Mayo, in 1906, it will be found that since the first of the Housing Acts was passed—thirty or forty years ago—only 4,565 houses were built to accommodate about 4,600 families, and 700 other persons at a cost of about £790,000. If to those figures be added those for last year, only about 4,806 houses have been built to accommodate about 4,650 families and 1,000 other persons at a cost of £830,000 in the long space of time I have just mentioned. Such attempts at reconstruction can hardly be dignified by the name of progress, and if the work of housing the people be no more rapid in the future the prospect is enough to make the heart of any lover of his kind sink within him. But the explanation of the little advance made is perfectly obvious. It lies in the terms on which the necessary funds have been obtainable. For many years past the rates of interest on loans for housing schemes have varied from 3½ per cent. for a period not exceeding thirty years, to 4¼ per cent. for a period not exceeding forty years. At the present moment the rate of interest for a period not exceeding fifty years is as high as 3¾ per cent. The average annuity, to put it otherwise, payable in respect of a loan for forty years has been for many years as high as £4 17s. 6d. Is it any wonder that Irish municipalities, already burdened with high rates, hesitated in the past, and still hesitate to embark on housing schemes? Schemes carried out on such terms would necessarily mean either impossible rents or impossible rates. We think that the time has at last come when some other alternative in this matter ought to be presented to the Irish municipalities, and hence we offer this Bill for the acceptance of Parliament. To the provisions of the measure other than the money clauses I do not suppose that objection will be taken from any quarter. In those provisions we have made a studious effort to keep clear of controversy. In point of fact they are almost all taken from enactments already existing in England. I shall not, therefore, trouble the House by explaining any of them except two. One of the greatest hardships from which we in Ireland suffer is the necessity of coming to Parliament to obtain legislative sanction to every little clearance scheme we undertake. Even when those schemes are not opposed they cost a sum of money which to the smaller municipalities is a positive terror. We think the decision of the Local Government Board in Ireland ought to be final and conclusive, and we propose to make it so in every case. That is one of the two proposals to which I have referred. The other is to offer inducements to philanthropic associations and to private builders to join in the work of re-housing the people. I confess I have not much faith myself in the existence of the private speculator anxious to risk his fortune in the effort to benefit his fellowmen. It would not be reasonable, after all, to expect a private business man to do anything of the kind without some inducement, though I am bound to add that there are to be found in several towns in Ireland business men who have been wise enough to build dwellings for their workmen at their own expense. As a matter of fact, the chief philanthropist whom we have had is Lord Iveagh, whose housing work is deserving of the highest praise. What we propose to do is to offer to private builders an abatement or a total remission of rates for a period not exceeding ten years on houses built by them for the working classes, on condition that the houses are kept for working men and that the rents charged shall be approved of by the local authority. We offer to associations formed for the purpose of providing working-class dwellings, not only a remission or abatement of rates, but sites at abated rents for a definite period on similar conditions. Whether these inducements will be sufficient to achieve the object in view remains to be seen, but we are hopeful that they will have some effect, as they have had effect on the Continent and particularly in Germany, and in so far as they are effective it is plain that they will relieve the strain on the pecuniary resources of the local authorities. Now I come to our financial proposals. They are, broadly speaking, three in number. First, we propose that the period for the repayment of loans shall henceforth be eighty years. When I mention that this provision is already the law in England, I suppose I need say no more about it, except that we propose to make the enactment effective, which it is not in England as yet, by directing the lending authority to lend for the period mentioned should the Local Government Board so recommend. This direction was omitted in the English Act of 1903, whether designedly or not I do not say, but we take care to put it in our Bill. In the second place, we propose that £5,000,000 of the £10,500,000 of deposits in the Irish Savings Banks shall be earmarked for housing purposes in Ireland and shall be lent as required to the local authorities at the same rate of interest as is paid upon them—namely, 2½ per cent. I am, of course, aware that some objections may be taken to this proposal, but it seems to me that they may be all satisfactorily answered. It may be thought, for instance, that the security of the depositors for their money may be endangered. The answer is that we do not propose to touch that security. If the money is lent as we suggest, the State will be as responsible as before to the depositors. Is the security of the State for the repayment of the money by the local authorities sufficient? It will be the very same security as it has now for every loan it makes for local purposes. It may again be said that to lend £5,000,000 of those deposits would involve the selling of the stocks in which the deposits are now invested, and that such an operation might disturb the money market. That might be the case if the £5,000,000 were to be advanced at once; but inasmuch as it is utterly unlikely, if we may judge from the past, that more than £250,000 will be advanced in any one year, for some years to come at least, and as the annual increase in the Irish deposits is nearly £500,000, it is plain that not a single pound need be raised by selling consols. For the same reason there could be no loss in charging only the same interest as is paid to the depositors. I am aware that there has been a loss to the Exchequer on the income account of those deposits, and that some persons complain that that loss should be borne by the general taxpayer. But that is because of the present way of dealing with the deposits, and in this case, moreover, there need be no loss, because I do not think we should object, if it were shown that a loss were certain to occur, to a fraction being added to the interest to cover the loss. I think I have now exhausted the possible objections, and all I shall add on this point is that as those deposits are Irish money, the expression of Irish wishes in regard to the use of them ought to have some weight with the Government if there are no insuperable obstacles in the way. Our third proposal is that there should be a grant-in-aid, and if I am not wearying the House I should like to explain how such a grant becomes necessary and how it may be made without touching on any but Irish funds. The figures I am about to give are, I assure the House, the result of careful inquiry, and I think they may be taken as broadly correct. Different sorts of habitations will be built. Some will be large buildings with flats, some will be two-storey houses; some will be one-storey cottages; some will be built in places where land and labour will be comparatively dear; some in places where they will be comparatively cheap. Taking an average, I believe £200 would be the cost per habitation, everything included. At this cost, 25,000 habitations could be provided out of the £5,000,000, apart, of course, from those erected under the inducements to which I have referred. Now, I shall suppose the whole £5,000,000 expended and in course of repayment. How is it to be repaid? Although we propose to make the period of repayment not exceed eighty years, it is more than probable that the lending authority will lend for that period only when the purchase of land is in question, and that the loan for building will be only for sixty years. The proposal on which this Bill is based is that the time of repayment for both purposes should be that already fixed by the last Labourers Act for rural cottages and plots, namely, sixty-eight and a half years. If this suggestion be adopted, the annuity which would have to be provided to repay £5,000,000 lent at 2½ per cent. would be about £153,000. To meet that amount there would be in the first place rents of the habitation. Here again I have made careful inquiry, and I submit the result with some confidence. The present rents vary from 2s. 6d. to 6s. and 7s. 6d. a week. Such rents could never be paid by those most in need of housing accommodation. We must be prepared for some rents as low as 1s. and 1s. 6d. a week. But again, taking an average, I am assured that half-a-crown a week would be a safe figure to adopt. Such a rent would yield £162,500 a year, from which, however, a deduction must be made of at least 30 per cent. for rates, insurance, and repairs. We thus arrive at a net rental of about £114,000, leaving a deficit of about £39,000. Is that deficit to be thrown on the ratepayers? In my opinion the great bulk of it cannot, without stopping all local improvements. The rates in most of our cities and towns are already very high. They run in many cases up to 8s. and 10s. in the £. In most of them important works await accomplishment. Those works must be postponed to the Greek Kalends if the localities in question are compelled to devote all their available resources to the housing of the poorer classes. We therefore say that a grant-in-aid is necessary, and we suggest two sources from which it may legitimately come. First, there is what is called the Irish Suitors' Fund—a fund consisting of moneys lodged in Court to the credit of pending suits. The greater part of that fund cannot be touched, because it may be called upon at any moment to be paid to the persons to whom it is decided to belong; but there is a portion of it called the Dormant Fund to which no man now living, or ever likely to be born, can successfully lay claim. It has been drawn upon in the past for the building of the Courts in Dublin, as the similar fund in England has provided the cost of the new Courts of Justice in London, and so lately as the year 1894 a sum of £15,000 was taken out of it for the new Law Library in Dublin. It now amounts to £375,000, of which £171,000 is actually in cash in the Bank of Ireland. We ask that this fund be thrown into an Irish Housing Fund, and we calculate that, if invested in such trustee securities as are authorised by the Irish Land Act of 1903, the income of it might well exceed £13,000 a year. The second source from which we would draw a grant-in-aid is the Irish Crown and Quit Rents. All those rents and the product of the sales of such rents now go into the Imperial Exchequer to an amount considerably in excess of what we ask. We ask that £25,000 a year of that amount should be thrown into the Irish Housing Fund, and if this proposal were acceded to the result would be that the work they contemplated could be carried out without, probably, any loss at all, and certainly without any material loss to the rates. Strictly speaking, we ask not for a penny of British money. The Irish deposits are not British money; the Irish Suitors' Fund is not British money; the Irish Crown and Quit Rents are not British money. These last-mentioned moneys are paid out of the rents paid by Irish tenants or out of the prices paid by Irish tenants for the purchase of their holdings. Is it not too bad if they are not available for the housing of Irish labourers and artisans, especially when, as it appears, they are not available for any other Irish purpose? But, even if this contribution from the Irish Crown and Quit Rents were regarded as practically an Imperial grant, it would not be too much to expect from this Parliament whose legislation is largely responsible for those blots on our civilisation, which we seek to wipe out by means of this Bill. It would not be too much to expect, especially from the present Government, almost all the members of which have in past years admitted the disgraceful over-taxation of Ireland during the last half-century. Such is the measure we present to the House to-day. We think it a just, expedient, and practicable measure. But, of course, I will not pretend to say that the financial proposals it contains are the only proposals by which the end aimed at can be attained. We have had to work in this matter without the knowledge which official experience alone can give. We, therefore, shall not be surprised if we are shown that some of the measures which we suggest must be modified or that for some of them others ought to be preferred. In that event, and I think I can speak for my colleagues, all I can say is that we shall be satisfied if the adoption of any other financial proposals would lead to practically the end we desire. For the rest, I am under no delusions in regard to the effect of this measure. We do not expect—at least I do not—that it will completely and quickly solve this housing problem. The problem is far too big for a rapid solution. But it will break the back of the difficulty. It will change the face of many towns, it will sweep away the worst of those terrible haunts of misery which disfigure several of the larger centres of population, and it will do this before the present generation has passed away. I hope I am not too sanguine in expecting that this House of Commons will interpose no obstacle to the carrying out of this great operation. I beg to second the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) in moving the rejection of the Bill, said that the hon. Member for North Dublin asked him whether his objection would be towards the financial clauses or towards the principle of the Housing Act. He thought he could set the hon. Member's mind at ease at once by saying that his objection, which he held to be an extremely good one, was against the financial clauses of the Bill and not against the Bill itself. It did not seem to him that the Housing of the Working Classes Act had anything whatever to do with this measure. The measure contained a certain number of financial clauses directed towards that particular Act and it was towards the financial clauses, which he thought were the worst he had ever seen put into a Bill, that he proposed to direct his opposition. He could assure the hon. Member that he was prepared to argue in Dublin or any other place that the turning of local authorities into big landlords was not a good thing and he regretted very much that the Party to which he belonged ever introduced the principle.. That, however, had nothing whatever to do with the Bill before the House, and he should confine himself entirely to the financial clauses. The hon. Member who had introduced the Bill had said that this was not a party question. Of course it was not a party question, and it was not with any desire to be antagonistic to Ireland or to Irish measures that he objected to the Bill. He would object to it equally strongly if it was brought in for England, and he hoped the House would understand that he did not wish to be in any kind of way personal or discourteous to Ireland or to Members below the gangway. The hon. Member had also stated that he had not set about his work in a peddling manner. He (Sir F. Banbury) agreed, because he could not conceive anybody going about in a more drastic manner to achieve the object which he had at heart than the hon. Member had done. The first clause empowered the Savings Bank Commissioners to advance five millions of money to Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland who in turn were to advance the money to the local authority. He believed the money in the Post Office Savings Bank in Ireland at the present moment was £13,000,000, and of that it was proposed that £5,000,000 was to be advanced for this one object at 2½ per cent. interest. He would first deal with the advance of five millions of money to this object. He had been for a good number of years engaged in business in the City of London. Owing to the necessity of keeping a watchful eye upon Members opposite he had been obliged to relinquish his business in the last few years, but he had not forgotten what he had learnt during the thirty-five years that he was engaged in active business in the City. The first thing that a banker had to learn was that he must keep a certain portion of his securities liquid and easily realisable. He defied anybody in the House to say that £5,000,000 invested in houses was a realisable asset. It could not be realised at all. It might be a fairly good security, but it was what was called in banking circles a "lock-up," and it was locked up for eighty years. It was the custom of bankers not to lend money for more than six months, and here was a proposal to lend money for eighty years. That was a great infringement upon the management of the savings banks in the country. The money in the savings banks was invested chiefly in Consols. When the seconder dealt with the fact that the security for this money would be the rates of the local authorities he forgot that Parliament had always refused to allow the savings banks to invest their money in securities of local authorities. Sir Albert Rollit, who was a Member of that House for many years, had tried to alter the law so as to enable the savings banks to invest their money in the securities of local authorities. He (Sir F. Banbury) was one of a Committee appointed by the House some five years ago to go into the question, and he thought, with the exception of Sir Albert Rollit, the whole Committee were unanimous—certainly all the banking part of it—in refusing to support the proposal. The reason why it was necessary for the savings bank funds to be invested in Consols was that they were, after gold, the most easily realisable security, and the argument had always been brought forward by those who had contended that it was not necessary for the savings banks to keep a reserve of gold, that as their funds were invested in Consols they were easily realisable in the event of a sudden call being made by the depositors, and that therefore there was no necessity to keep a reserve of gold. He thought himself there was a good deal in that argument. Unfortunately at the present moment Consols were not so easily realisable as they had been, but still they were the only securities which in a panic could be realised, and therefore there was something to be said for the custom of the savings banks to invest all their monies in this sort of securities and not to hold gold. But if £5,000,000, which was something like 40 per cent. of the monies invested in the Irish Savings Banks, were to be invested in an unrealisable security, what would happen in the event of a sudden withdrawal of money by depositors? It was all very well to say that the local authorities could be called upon to pay. They could not be called upon to pay, because the period was for eighty years, and it would be quite impossible to go to them and demand a large sum of money down at a time of serious financial depression—that being the only time when there would be a run of depositors. The hon. Member had also said it might be argued that to realise £5,000,000 of stock would have a serious effect upon the market. At the present moment it would, and no doubt it would have a depressing effect on Irish Land Stock, which they were all anxious to see improve in value. It was true that the hon. Member had said that the money would not be required all at once, but it would at any rate be required in three or four years.

Mr. CLANCY: In twelve or fourteen years.

Sir F. BANBURY said he did not see how anyone could say how long the period would be, because that depended upon the local authorities in Ireland, and how soon they would be able to get to work. When local authorities could get money below the market value they were not backward in availing themselves of that advantage. The fact that people knew that a large amount of this stock was coming on the market would have a depressing effect, and that was one of the reasons why the Irish Land Stock had been so much depressed. He noticed that under the Bill the rate of interest was not to exceed 2½ per cent. The expenses of managing the Savings Bank came to ¼ per cent., so that if they were to pay only 2½ per cent. there would be a loss of ¼ per cent. to the Savings Bank, which would have to be made good out of Imperial funds. It was quite true that the hon. Member had said he might be willing to consent in Committee to a slight increase so as to reduce that loss, but the rest of the loss would have to be borne by Imperial Funds.

MR. CLANCY said they were willing to consent to such an increase as would cover the loss.

SIR F. BANBURY said that that made the proposal slightly more reasonable. He would remind the House that four or five years ago an attempt was made to increase the interest on deposits in the Savings Bank, and that was supported by hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House. He opposed it very strongly at the time, and the Committee of which he was a Member came to the conclusion that they could not increase the rate of interest, although there was a very great demand for it. There was every reason to suppose that with the rise in the value of money which had taken place since that time any proposal brought forward to increase the rate of interest paid in the Savings Bank would be harder to resist now than before. If such a proposal were brought forward and carried he did not think Irish Members would be willing to allow Ireland to be made an exception, and Irish investors would naturally want to receive the benefit of the higher interest. But he had another great objection to the Bill. Even allowing the principle that it was right that local authorities should build houses for people to live in, surely they should only be allowed to do so upon economic conditions. They should go to the open market, find their money, and build the houses on the ordinary conditions. Why should they build at less than cost price and ask the State to pay the difference? That was a step towards Socialism and he was quite sure that, whatever other parts of the country might say, the City of London would not agree to it. The hon. Member who moved this Bill had admitted that the rate of interest varied from 3½ per cent. to 4½ per cent., and consequently under this Bill they were proposing to make a present to the local authorities of the difference between 2½ per cent. and 4 per cent. interest on £5,000,000. To that proposal he objected very strongly. It had also been said that a similar measure to this would be demanded for England and Scotland.

MR. CLANCY said he did not say that. What he stated was that a similar measure had been recommended for England and Scotland by the Select Committee of 1906.

SIR F. BANBURY said he felt quite certain that the same measure would be asked for for both England and Scotland if this Bill passed, and that was why he opposed it. That was an extremely large order, and it would be extremely dangerous to take the money in the Savings Bank and invest it in small houses. One proposal to which he objected was the extension of the period of repayment from sixty to eighty years. It was quite true that the Act of 1903 contained a proposal of that kind, but there was no provision in that Act whereby the money would be taken from the Savings Bank. They knew that under Clause 5 the money was going to be exhausted. The Bank of Ireland, whether it liked it or not, would take it away. Clause 6 apparently appropriated a portion of the Irish Quit Rent Fund to housing purposes. He did not profess to know what that fund was, but, whatever it was, he did not see why it should be taken for housing purposes. He objected to Clause 9, which proposed to empower local authorities to acquire lodging-houses outside their own districts. He thought that was a very strong order. Hon. Members ought to be satisfied with local authorities looking after their own districts.

MR. CLANCY: That is copied from the English Act.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the last Government had, perhaps, made a mistake in giving local authorities the power to go outside their districts in this matter. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: Why were you not here to look after them?]

Clause 11 provided for the remission and abatement of rates in certain cases. He did not see why that clause should pass. Was that in any English Act?

MR. CLANCY: Undoubtedly that is a Tory enactment.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would like to know what Act it was. But whether it was in another Act or not he objected to the proposal that a local authority should be empowered to abate or remit rates for a period not exceeding ten years. It was evident from the look of the House that the Irish Party were in a strong majority, and in all probability they would carry the Second Reading of the Bill. He objected to the financial clauses very strongly, and, therefore, he begged to move.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans), in seconding the Amendment, said it seemed a pity that this Bill had been brought forward that day in view of the fact that the President of the Local Government Board had in preparation a measure to deal with the whole question of the housing of the working classes. If hon. Members below the gangway had waited for that Bill they would have had the advantage of all the information of statistics which, of course, were available to the President of the Local Government Board. He was quite aware that there were slight differences in localities, but, speaking generally, the conditions of slum areas were practically the same in every part of the United Kingdom. He had entire sympathy with proposals for improving the housing of the working classes if injustice was not done to others in the carrying of them out. In a Blue-book issued the other day containing licensing statistics for 1907, there was an introductory statement confirming the opinion expressed in 1906 that the whole question of intemperance was bound up with the density of the population, and not with the number of licences. Hon. Members from Ireland would not, he was sure, think that the Party to which he belonged would be at all likely to lack sympathy with remedial measures dealing with densely populated districts throughout the country. Under this Bill the period for the repayment of loans was extended from sixty to eighty years, and in regard to that he would point out that the security would, in all probability in a great many cases entirely disappear long before the term was exhausted. The cottages which would constitute the security for the advances would at the end of eighty years be poor security if they were built on the £150 principle so much advocated in connection with garden cities. Here, apparently, the securities were to be hypothecated twice over, and he did not see where the security of the second lender was likely to come in. A second mortgagee generally came off badly, and in this case he was not likely to be an exception to the common rule. The House had already been reminded that the Congested Districts Board was in a parlous state, and in want of money. Why should not that Board annex the various funds which this Bill proposed to appropriate to housing purposes? That Board was now in existence, they had done excellent work, and at present they were handicapped through want of funds. The House ought to know something more than had been stated as to the kind of lodging-houses proposed to be erected, and as to the conditions under which the people would be likely to live in them. There might be lodging-houses which would become mere rookeries just as undesirable as those which were now occupied by the people whom the Bill sought to benefit. The provision in the English Act which enabled an authority to provide houses for the working classes outside their own areas was inserted for a specific purpose. It was to enable this vast Metropolis to go outside its own area, which was already closely covered with buildings of all sorts, in order to provide for the congested population. That seemed to be a reasonable thing, but the conditions which obtained in Ireland, except, perhaps, in Dublin and Belfast, were not similar, and there was no necessity for enabling local authorities to go outside their own areas. If there was to be the competition between local authorities, which might arise from the granting of this power, waste would result instead of economic efficiency in the carrying out of the provisions of the Bill.

Then he noticed that the occupants of these dwellings were to be exempt from the payment of rates. It was very desirable, no doubt, that these cottages and lodging-houses should be erected and conducted on the most economic plan; but that would be a great hardship on the other ratepayers, many of whom were poor people living under great difficulties in their endeavour to keep the wolf from the door. It was unreasonable that the latter should have their rates for sewage, lighting, maintenance of roads, and other local charges increased, while the occupants of the houses built under this Bill would be exempt altogether. He did not know whether any hon. Gentleman below the gangway had had experience of having a local authority as a landlord, but a local authority had neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked, they were trustees for the general public and they had often to act in a hard and harsh way which would be disastrous to many tenants. That was undoubtedly a disadvantage which might be got over by the proposition which would shortly be placed on the Table by the President of the Local Government Board. But at all events it was undesirable that this Bill should now be read a second time. He noticed that it was to come into force, if passed, immediately. There were some Acts of Parliament dealing with customs and the like which it was really necessary to make operative the moment they were passed in order that people might not be induced to speculate financially as a result of the Bill being made an Act, but although the housing question was urgent, especially in densely populated districts, it must be manifest to everyone having experience that it would be unreasonable that a measure containing very far-reaching financial provisions should come into force at once. Without lacking any sympathy with those who were suffering from overcrowding, he yet believed that the present moment was ill-judged in which to bring in this measure; and however much it went against the grain, there was no alternative available for him but to second the rejection of the Bill so ably moved by the hon. Member for the City of London.

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.) said that although the Bill now before the House had not been backed by any Unionist Member from Ireland, it must not be supposed that there was amongst them any feeling of hostility towards the objects of the promoters. On the contrary, he and his colleagues who represented constituencies in Ulster were strongly in sympathy with any well-considered proposal for extending the facilities for the erection of houses for the working classes in cities and towns in Ireland. Any hon. Member on those benches who opposed the principle of legislation such as was proposed in this Bill would, he ventured to say, be acting contrary to the policy of the Party to which he professed allegiance; because it must not be forgotten that all the principal Acts of Parliament which had up to the present time supplied the machinery for improving the housing of the working classes had been the work of the Unionist Party. He need scarcely remind the House that the Act of 1890—which was the chief foundation of all efforts of recent years in this direction—both in Ireland and Great Britain, was passed through Parliament by a Conservative majority; and the amending Acts of 1900 and 1903 were also carried under similar auspices. The two measures of 1900 and 1903 to which he had alluded were, however, not applied to Ireland. He did not propose on that occasion to enter into any examination of the reason why Ireland was excluded from the benefits of the increased facilities which were then afforded to England. He would only say that the fact that Ireland had had to wait for these advantages simply served to strengthen the claim which was now put forward on her behalf—that the amendments of the law which experience had shown to be necessary should now be granted, after due consideration by the House. It was scarcely possible to over-estimate the benefits which had accrued to the working classes from the increased attention which had been bestowed in recent years upon the question of improving the dwellings of the people. It was beyond all question that the condition of the home affected in the most profound manner both the health and morals of the people. Overcrowded and insanitary houses were productive of disease, and of social evils, which could not be eradicated by any palliative measures that might be taken—whether by the Legislature or by organised private effort. He felt sure he would carry the whole House with him when he said that by giving the people good, sanitary houses they checked many of those evils at the source, and promoted the well-being of the whole nation. In Ireland, he was glad to say, considerable progress had been made in this direction during recent years—both in the towns and in the country. The Labourers Acts—which had been passed in successive years—had effected, or were effecting, a revolution in regard to rural housing; and what was now needed was further assistance from the State towards making a like beneficial change in the conditions under which the working classes in the towns had to live. That there had been a great improvement in respect of housing during the last thirty years was apparent from certain statistics which were included in the last Census Returns. The Census Commissioners of 1841 divided the dwellings then existing into four classes, and that classification had been retained since. The fourth, or lowest class, comprised all mud cabins or houses built of other perishable material having only one room and window; the third consisted of a better description of house with two to four rooms and windows; the second were good farmhouses and houses in towns having from five to nine rooms and windows; and the first included all houses of a better description than the foregoing. In 1841, the single-room mud cabins numbered 491,278, or more than one-third of the entire number of inhabited houses in Ireland. In 1881, the number of this class of house had dropped to 40,665; and in 1901 it had declined still further to 9,872. There was every reason to believe that by the next census in 1911, this class of house would have been improved entirely out of existence. The figures of the third class of house also showed that progress had been made. The number of houses in this class had declined from 384,475 in 1881 to 251,606 in 1901. On the other hand, the second or better class of dwellings showed an increase from 422,241 in 1881 to 521,455 in 1901. The first class also showed an increase in the same period from 66,727 to 75,225. There was, however, another fact in these census figures which was not so satisfactory. In 1881 there were living in 66,727 first-class houses only 57,673 families; but in 1901 the 75,225 houses returned in the first class contained no fewer than 100,807 families. These facts indicated that there was a considerable amount of overcrowding. The census figures relating to one-room tenements also demonstrated the need for increased attention being given to the housing question. In 1901, there were in Ireland 79,149 tenements of one room, and in 5,587 of these single-room dwellings seven or more persons—in some cases as many as twelve—were crowded together under conditions which could not fail to be detrimental to both health and morals. In Dublin at the time of that census, the degree of overcrowding was shown to be very intense—unparalleled, in fact, by any large city in the British Isles—40·6 per cent. of the population occupying "overcrowded dwellings." In the Report issued by the Board of Trade on the cost of living of the working classes some particulars were given relating to the question of housing in certain Irish towns, and the efforts which had been made in recent years to deal with the evil of overcrowding. In Dublin—where the need for reform was shown to be most urgent, by the Census Reports of 1901—the corporation, amongst other undertakings, had spent £250,000 in clearing insanitary areas; and it had also erected artisans dwellings and lodging-houses. Private enterprise had also been vigorously at work in the same direction, and this Report stated—

> "As the result of the joint activities of the numerous agencies concerned with the housing of the poor, probably more than 20,000 of the artisan and labouring classes are now housed in dwellings erected especially with a view to their comfort and health."

Belfast was the exact opposite of Dublin, both as regarded housing and other matters as well. The two places were "as the poles asunder." Belfast was the centre of a thriving industry, and its working-class population was generally in a state of comfort and prosperity. The city was continually spreading itself abroad into the country surrounding it, and especially to the southward. There was no lack of building ground, and as a consequence the prevailing type of working-class house was not the large tenement-building, but a two-storeyed house such as was commonly found in English towns. Belfast was, on the whole, exempt from the evils of overcrowding, whereas in Dublin in 1901, there were 40·6 per cent. of the population occupying overcrowded dwellings; in Belfast, only 8·29 per cent. of the population inhabited houses described as overcrowded; and only 5·27 per cent. of the inhabited houses came under that category. The beneficial effect of these measures, and others of a like nature, was reflected by a sensible decline of the death rate, which in Dublin had dropped from 31·9 in 1897 to 24·1 in 1906. The death rate in Belfast was considerably lower than that of Dublin. In 1905 it was only twenty per thousand, and that was only slightly lower than the average of the preceding six years. The fact went to establish the close connection that existed between sanitary dwellings and the health of the community—a fact which might be supported if necessary by the particulars obtainable from the statistics relating to other towns in Ireland. Considerable attention had been devoted lately to the unfortunate prevalence in Ireland of the disease of consumption. This terrible disease had been responsible for an exceptionally heavy mortality; and the fact was disclosed by the Report of the Registrar-General that in 1905 there were in Ireland no fewer than 12,000 deaths due to tubercular diseases. The death rate from this cause in Ireland stood at a far higher figure than in either England or Scotland. He was glad to say that these facts had impressed the people of Ireland with the necessity of taking vigorous measures to check the progress of the evil. A movement was now proceeding in their country which promised to have the most beneficial results in educating public opinion in reference to precautionary measures, and also in stimulating local authorities to take action in the direction of safeguarding the public health. The extreme gravity of the evil was being recognised; and the question of remedial measures was engaging the attention of sanitary authorities all over Ireland. The Chief Secretary had promised legislation on the subject; and the right hon. Gentleman would be doing a real service to Ireland by introducing and pushing forward his proposals without delay. In this matter as in the case of every other ill which affects humanity, 'prevention is better than cure'; and it was one of the facts which everybody admitted, that overcrowding and insanitary dwellings were very fruitful causes of this and other diseases. They urged, therefore, that the facts relating to the prevalence of consumption in Ireland strongly supported the claim now made that it should be made easier for local authorities to take steps to improve the housing of the people. As the representative of a constituency which contained several important urban communities, he gave a very cordial support to the principle of this Bill. At the same time, he was bound to say that in his opinion some of the proposals of the measure now before the House would require very careful consideration before they were embodied in an Act of Parliament. For his part, he was disposed to think that, having regard to the novelty of some of the provisions of the Bill, the proper course to adopt in regard to it would be to give it a Second Reading, and then refer it to a Select Committee, who would give it an expert examination and report as to how far it was possible or desirable to give it legislative effect. The principal clauses of the Bill were those which dealt with the finance of the question. The chief obstacle in the way of local authorities in their efforts to provide improved dwellings, at rents within the means of the working classes, had been the difficulty of obtaining cheap money. Under the conditions which had prevailed hitherto, it had been found, in many places, practically impossible to build houses of a good class and let them at rents which the people who needed them most could afford to pay, without imposing additional burdens upon the already heavily-burdened ratepayers. The proposals made by the promoters of the Bill to overcome that difficulty would, he ventured to think, require very careful consideration, both in the interests of the depositors in the savings banks, and also in the interests of the taxpayer. The Bill proposed to take a sum of £5,000,000 from the amount on deposit in the Trustee Savings Banks and the Post Office Savings Bank in Ireland, and to lend it to the local authorities for housing purposes at a rate of interest not exceeding 2½ per cent. It might, of course, be argued that the interests of depositors would not be affected if this proposal were carried out. They had the State guarantee both for the interest on their money and for the refund of their deposits on demand; and that guarantee would not be affected by the fact that the money was being used for the purpose of financing housing schemes. It was, however, a matter for careful consideration whether this method of using the deposits in the savings banks would not tend to lessen public confidence in those institutions and lead to the withdrawal of deposits. The effect on the interests of the taxpayer could be estimated with a greater amount of certainty. At the present time the deposits in the savings banks were invested by the National Debt Commissioners in public securities which yielded a higher rate of interest than that paid to depositors, and the difference between the interest received and the interest paid was used to meet the expenses incidental to the carrying on of the savings banks. In former years these institutions were, by this means, self-supporting; but for the last ten or fifteen years there had been an annual deficiency in the income account of the savings banks, which had had to be made good out of public funds. The matter had been the subject of debate in the House on several occasions, and proposals had been made to reduce the rate of interest paid to depositors as a means of getting rid of the deficiency. That necessity had been avoided up to the present time; and the hope had been entertained and expressed by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer that, as the result of arrangements which had been made, the deficiency would, in course of a few years, disappear. The fact was, however, that it had not yet been got rid of, and in the Estimates for the next financial year a sum of no less than £88,000 appeared as a charge upon the public funds, to make good the anticipated loss on the working of the Post Office Savings Banks alone. It must be obvious that if a sum of £5,000,000 was to be withdrawn from securities which yielded 2¾ per cent. or 3 per cent., and lent to local authorities at 2½ per cent. or less, the loss to the Savings Bank funds would be very serious indeed, and would require a considerably larger sum to be placed on the Estimates to meet it. They had yet to hear the views of the Treasury on this proposal, but he would be very much surprised if they regarded it with favour. He believed that those who made the proposal relied upon the experience of a similar plan which had been tried in Belgium. He was not in a position to speak of the results of that experiment, but looking at the present condition of the savings banks in this country, and the charges which had now to be met by the Exchequer in respect to them, he was somewhat sceptical as to the practicability of the proposal now made. Clause 2 of the Bill proposed to extend the period for which money might be borrowed for the purposes of the Housing of the Working-Classes Acts to eighty years. As to that he would only say that while that period might, with safety, be allowed for money borrowed for the purchase of land, he did not think it would be desirable to extend the provision to buildings. The third clause of the Bill was also one which, in his opinion, would require very careful consideration. It was there proposed that money borrowed for the purposes of the Housing of the Working-Classes Acts—whether borrowed before or after the passing of this Act—should not come within the limitations which were placed on the borrowing powers of local authorities by the Public Health Act. He regarded that as a very serious proposal indeed. The debts of local authorities in Ireland had already reached a very high amount, in proportion to the valuation of their respective areas. He found that—taking municipal boroughs and all urban districts in Ireland together—in 1907 the total valuation of these districts was returned at £4,421,020; and the total indebtedness was £8,462,227. That was to say, the total indebtedness of urban committees in Ireland was nearly double the amount of the valuation; and it would be a very serious step to remove all restrictions from these local authorities in respect of borrowing powers for housing purposes. Hon. Members opposite took up a very exalted attitude on the subject of borrowing for military and naval purposes. They had heard from those benches of late many a high moral lecture upon the enormities of the late Government because they carried out large permanent defensive works by means of loans. What were they going to say about this proposal? Was it more unprincipled to borrow money for defensive purposes than to contract loans for building houses for the working classes? For his part, he thought the powers of local authorities to carry out works by means of loans needed to be controlled; and he was not disposed to consent to the sweeping away all the checks which had been imposed by Parliament upon the borrowing powers of these public bodies. The House must have regard for the interests of the ratepayers, who might have absolutely intolerable burdens placed upon them if the unrestricted powers asked for were granted to local authorities. One of the most interesting features of the Bill was the proposal to create a Housing Fund, by taking a sum of £370,000 from the Irish Suitors' Fund, and appropriating £25,000 a year of Crown revenues. It was an ingenious proposal and it could be supported by the attractive argument that Irish money should be devoted to Irish purposes, and for the benefit of the Irish people. It was impossible not to feel a certain amount of sympathy with the idea; but again, he confessed that he awaited with considerable interest the views of the Government. It could not be denied that if by means of such a fund local authorities were assisted to the extent of 25 per cent. of the annual charge payable upon loans contracted by them for housing purposes, the work of improving the dwellings of the people would be very materially advanced. But the financial questions involved in this part of the scheme would, even if the support of the Government could be obtained, make it necessary that very careful consideration should be bestowed upon it. There were some proposals in the Bill which could only be given effect to with safety if they were accompanied by efficient safeguards. There was, for example, the power given to local authorities to establish lodging houses outside their own particular district. He was aware there was a precedent for that section in the Act of 1900 which applied to England and Wales, but he ventured to think it would be necessary in case of such a power being given to urban authorities in Ireland, to protect in some way the rights of the people residing in the districts in the neighbourhood of the towns. Without some measure of protection, it might be possible for a town council to plant a lodging house or a block of working class tenements in the midst of a residential suburb—against the wishes of the residents, and to the detriment of property owners in the neighbourhood. It would be necessary to secure that such a power should only be exercised by consent of the people immediately concerned. There were other details in the Bill which were open to criticism; but he would not detain the House further with an examination of those points. He should vote for the Second Reading of the Bill, but would reserve to himself the right to support such amendments in Committee as would make it a safe and workable measure; and one that would confer important benefits upon the working classes of Ireland without doing injustice to any class of the community.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.) said he was glad to find that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down intended to support the Second Reading of the Bill. His hon. friends had not suggested that the Bill was not to be changed or improved upon; they were satisfied to have the Bill thoroughly discussed in the House, believing as they did that it was intended to serve a great object in Ireland. It was to be financed, too, solely by Irish money without the British Treasury being called upon in any way for assistance. He apprehended that that suggestion would receive reasonable and favourable consideration from the

House. He did not know whether Irish Members should be pleased or otherwise at the sparse attendance. He himself believed that it portended that those who were absent were in favour of the Bill, and that when it came into Committee they would receive the support of all the empty benches opposite. The hon. Member for Mid Armagh in dealing with certain points in the Bill, had appeared to criticise them rather adversely. The hon. Member was somewhat mistaken in a few instances. He had referred to the power in this Bill for doing away with the present limitations for borrowing, and had pointed out that the present indebtedness of the urban authorities was twice the valuation of their area. He wondered if the hon. Gentleman was aware that the law at present was that the capital indebtedness of the urban authorities could not exceed twice their valuation, and therefore it was impossible that the indebtedness of an urban authority should be higher than the law allowed. Did the hon. Member also know that in England there was no such restriction? So far as that matter was concerned, Irish Members would be prepared to admit that they were more Conservative than this Radical country, and would not go the full length in this matter. The one part of the Bill which struck him as most interesting, and the one part that should strike the House and commend itself to its approval was the financial clause. They depended solely on Irish money to finance this scheme. It was a natural and reasonable thing that in order to get money for such a matter they should go to Irish funds, and he did not think any Englishman could object to their using their own money for the purposes of improving the houses of their own people. It would be admitted that the condition of things in regard to the houses in the towns and cities of Ireland was really deplorable. It showed that Ireland had suffered as no other part of the Empire had suffered. That the capital of Ireland should have houses in it where people were herded together under such conditions as had been stated by the hon. Member for North Dublin was a thing all must deplore, and one which Irishmen at all events should endeavour to better. They naturally felt, therefore, that a Bill intended to remedy that state of things should receive the kindly consideration of the House. When such unanimity prevailed among Irishmen of all politics and all creeds on such a subject they trusted that English Members would recognise that it was an Irish Bill supported by both parties from Ireland, financed by Irish money, and that it should be passed quickly through the House, because otherwise a strong argument would be furnished to show that the British House of Commons was incapable of legislating for Ireland.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said he was happy to be able to approach this subject as absolutely non-controversial, and to join with his hon. friends below the gangway in urging the claims of the scheme upon the Government. An uncontestable case had been made out for some measure to improve the houses of the working classes in Ireland. He spoke from the point of view of one who had gone through municipal life and who knew the need there was for improving the lot, not particularly of the artisan but of the labourer in the matter of housing. In one of the towns in his constituency they were able to carry a scheme under which they hoped to build these houses, but the difficulties which beset them were briefly that they found that, no matter how carefully the plans were drawn with a view to economy, they could not run the scheme without inflicting a burden upon the ratepayers. As had been rightly said, there had in recent years been very special burdens resting upon ratepayers in Ireland, and he had always found that while he could carry people with him up to the point of being in favour of such a scheme as this, the support rapidly fell away when it was found that a substantial call for the deficiency which any scheme would cause would be made upon the ratepayers. It had been pointed out that the average rate of interest charged upon loans for the purpose had been something between 3½ and 3¾ per cent. during the last ten years, and that the average period of repayment was forty years. It had also been pointed out that under an Act of a few years ago, the period of repayment had been extended to fifty years, but very few loans had been sanctioned by the Local Government Board with that extended period for repayment. The question briefly presented itself to him in this light, that there was a deficiency that must be met in some way, and he held that, if only on sanitary grounds, it was essential that they should look to the State to help them. What was needed from the Government was a contribution in aid to enable local authorities to tackle this question with the knowledge that the burden put upon the ratepayers would not be unreasonably large. Their difficulty was that they could not possibly finance these schemes on sound lines without making a claim upon the ratepayers, and what had been the result? That ordinary property owners were not anxious to cater for the labouring classes, and he would like to explain that by labouring classes he was not referring to skilled labourers and artisans in steady employment, but to what they had in such abundance in Ireland, the ordinary day or weekly labourer, earning perhaps in the cities from 15s. to 20s., and in the smaller towns from 12s. to 15s. per week. He desired to acknowledge, so far as artisans were concerned, that local builders had met the demand adequately in all the towns with which he was acquainted, and there was no scarcity in his own district of thoroughly sanitary houses at rents of 3s. to 5s. per week; but how they could expect a labourer in a country district, earning 12s. to 15s. a week, to pay that rent was a conundrum that he must leave to be settled by those who said it could be done. They had found in recent years a desire on the part of the artisans to get into better dwellings, and the labouring classes had had, of course, to go into the houses thus vacated, but owing to the low rents secured for the houses left by the artisans, they had not been kept in that state of repair which they would like to see. He felt that in this matter they had not been very favourably considered hitherto by the Government. As he had said, it was not a political question. It would be in the recollection of his friends below the gangway that he, in common with some of their number, had put Question after Question to the Treasury, first with a view to granting the loans for this purpose at a reduced rate of interest. That rate last year was 3¾ per cent., and he hoped at the conclusion of the discussion they would receive a more satisfactory, more lengthy, and more encouraging reply than the usual "No, Sir" that he had received in answer to the Questions he had put, both as regards the rate of interest and the extension of the period of repayment. He was aware that the Chief Secretary in this matter would again be up against the Treasury, but when all political parties in Ireland were unanimous in urging this scheme upon him, he might perhaps be more successful. The case presented that day must be on its merits very much stronger than could possibly have been the case made for giving £20,000 for a harbour recently in Ireland, where the free revenue of the harbour exceeded £8,000 per annum. In this case they were only asking for a grant-in-aid, but the other was a free grant to a harbour that should commercially have been able to finance any such undertaking. They must not forget that a good deal had been done in a quiet way in Ireland, but he wished to suggest to the Chief Secretary that the loss on schemes already carried out by the county boroughs had necessarily been considerably larger than in the urban areas and in areas not sufficiently large to qualify as urban. They found that in county boroughs something like 12,500 people had been re-housed under the old Act, and the annual loss had been equal to 17s. per head. In urban districts, 11,000 people had been re-housed, and the annual loss was only 8s. 2d. per head; and the Town Commissioners Boards had re-housed only 355 persons at an annual loss of 5s. 9d. per head. Those figures went to prove, he thought, that the cost of land had been a very serious factor in regard to what had happened in the more congested districts. He was glad to hear the seconder of the Resolution refer to what had been done on this side of the Channel, and he thought those who had taken a keen interest in this subject for a good many years would be the first to acknowledge that the great municipalities in England and Scotland had fully appreciated their responsibility in the matter. It was a good many years since he first inspected the model dwellings erected by the great city of Liverpool, and he thought the statistics quoted that afternoon went far to prove what a wonderful sanitary effect those improved model dwellings had had on the lower classes of that great city. Reference had also been made to Glasgow, which had, at great cost, rehoused a very large section of its population. Power was taken under the Bill to depute the responsibility of building schemes to local associations, but he had no faith in that. He believed that all such responsibility should be discharged by a popularly elected body directly in touch with the scheme with which they were dealing. He could recall that in Glasgow, after a large quantity of land had been acquired, the building trade did not see their way to take up the land at the price asked by the corporation, and the corporation stepped into the breach and built the properties in such a way that he thought the statistics quoted that afternoon were the best proof as to the class of dwellings they provided. The rate quoted as to one room residences was still not as low as they would like to see it, but it was almost 40 per cent. lower than ten years ago. Another great remedial agency which had been at work in recent years, was the wonderful expansion of electric trams. In Belfast they had found the operation of those trams in inducing the workpeople to go and live in the suburbs was having a most encouraging effect on the sanitation of the city. The people were induced by the low fares to go to distances previously quite impossible, and they were able to secure sanitary dwellings at lower rents than they could obtain in the more congested central districts of the city. The same thing applied to all the cities, even including Dublin, and in regard to Dublin he admired the frankness of the seconder of the motion in bringing before the House the startling ratio of congestion that still prevailed in that city. To him personally it was a matter of regret that in recent years the corporation of Dublin did not seem to have been so sincere in improving the conditions of the working people as the previous corporation was, and he thought hon. Members below the gangway who were members of that corporation would hardly gainsay that. They knew they had promoted large schemes. Under one Bill before the House seven or eight years ago, they got permission to make certain purchases of land, and those seven years had gone by, and not one brick had been placed upon another on that land, while the cost of the land was an annual burden to the ratepayers of the city. To him it was a matter of regret that there had not been more enterprise on behalf of the corporation. Reference was made to the great work that had been done in Dublin by a well known philanthropist already mentioned, and he thought he had set a most worthy example to the corporation of Dublin, as to what could be done in the way of improving the habitations of the working people. He gave the Bill his most hearty support, on the assumption that it would go to Committee, while reserving his opinion on some of its clauses with regard to which he did not see exactly eye to eye with his Nationalist friends. He was not quite satisfied with the financial proposals, and he hoped the Government would be able to suggest others, a little less startling perhaps, but equally valuable in providing the funds which undoubtedly would be necessary to induce municipalities to move forward. What they wanted was a direct grant in aid. They did not want it to be ear-marked from any special fund. He knew of no reason why they should not expect this grant to come from the Treasury in the ordinary way. He suggested that some compromise of the kind mentioned by the hon. Member for North Dublin, of loans at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. repayable under the Land Act term, would be reasonable and at the same time would substantially help the municipalities. There were two proposals in the Bill to which he desired to offer the most strenuous opposition in Committee. One was practically to abolish one of the stipulations of the Local Government Act limiting the borrowing powers of any municipality in ratio to its annual valuation. They had found in different parts of Ireland that municipalities had at times a weakness for outrunning the constable in this direction, and he thought the provisions limiting the borrowing powers of municipalities was a wholesome safeguard that should not lightly be laid aside. The other proposal to which he objected was the power to re-borrow. If a loan was taken for sixty years and the municipality went on annually paying the instalments, he could not see any circumstances that would justify them being empowered to re-borrow. These were not, however, vital matters and he hoped they would have from the Government a reply, not entirely granting their demands, but easing the way for municipalities in all parts of Ireland to meet what was undoubtedly a very necessary work, a work which was of value apart from the number of individuals that might be re-housed annually, and which would have a very important bearing on the problem of sanitation.

*MR. J. P. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) said he regretted very much that the generous speech just delivered should have been marred by a veiled attack on the Dublin Corporation. The hon. Member had charged the Dublin Corporation with not having done all they might with reference to providing housing accommodation for the citizens of Dublin. Perhaps, before he had finished, he would be able to show the House that the Dublin Corporation had done all they possibly could with the limited resources at their disposal. Only last year they introduced a Bill to try and meet the difficulty, but unfortunately the majority of the citizens, in view of the heavy impost already placed upon them, thought it was not advisable to go on with it. They were also, he believed, actuated by the thought that the Bill for the better housing of the people, promised in the King's Speech, would be extended to Ireland. They had unfortunately been disillusioned. He was not sorry that some of those who voted against the Corporation Bill had also been disillusioned. They had been told by the President of the Local Government Board that there was no Housing Bill to be introduced for Ireland. He hoped, however, the Bill they had to-day brought forward and which in a great measure covered the points with which the people in Ireland had to deal, so far as the housing problem was concerned, would meet with such a sympathetic reception that, if the Government could not go all the way, they would be able to meet them especially with reference to the monetary clauses upon which depended whether or not the Bill was ever given proper effect. He was unable until the hon. Member for Mid Armagh came to the end of his speech to make up his mind which way the hon. Member was going to vote. He devoted the whole of his speech to a critical examination of the Bill; he instanced what had been done in Belfast, leading them to believe that because Belfast was in the happy position of not requiring a Housing Bill, the whole of Ireland should be neglected. He disputed that. He believed there was no part of Ireland in which the hon. Member's speech would be read with more amazement than in Belfast, where the people agreed with the promotion of the Bill and the proper housing of the people of the whole country. When the hon. Member came to the end of his speech and he found he was going to vote in favour of the Bill, it reminded him of the old saying, "He was prepared to wound and yet afraid to strike."

MR. LONSDALE said the hon. Member had not understood him correctly if he thought he said Belfast would not require a housing scheme. What he did was to compare the conditions which prevailed in Belfast with its two-storied buildings to Dublin with its large buildings.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI said the people in Ireland would read the hon. Member's speech and be able to form an opinion of what he meant. He certainly had the idea that while he was supporting the Bill he was doing all he could to destroy it. He wished to remind the hon. Member that Belfast had been lucky enough to extend its boundaries, and the people had been able to get out to the added areas. That was denied to the people of Dublin. One of the purposes of the Bill was the extension of areas, and he was thoroughly in sympathy with it. At present, they were prevented in Dublin from taking accommodation where they could get it at Pembroke, Rathmines, and Kingstown. The Corporation of Dublin were themselves proprietors of land seven miles outside the city, upon which they were anxious to build housing accommodation for the people, but unfortunately they were not allowed to go there. They therefore came to Parliament and drew attention to the conditions under which the people were cooped up in wretched one-room tenements, and asked for the opportunity of giving them proper breathing space. They asked that the people should be able to get out into the open air. The labourer, by the precarious nature of his employment, could not afford the luxury of living in these country places, and they wanted him to be able to get proper housing accommodation in the city of Dublin. Perhaps the hon. Member, who charged the Corporation of Dublin with not doing their duty in building houses, would allow him to point out to him some of the things done by the Corporation. He would ask the House to bear in mind, when the charge of not building houses was levelled at the corporation, whether they, if placed in the position of the corporation, would go on building at the terrible prices he would mention. The corporation had endeavoured, by every means in their power, to meet this pressing difficulty. There was in a report issued by Sir Charles Cameron in 1901, a terrible paragraph which he would commend to the House in view of the statement of the hon. Member for St. Albans that the question was not urgent, and that they ought to wait and see the provisions of the promised Housing Bill for England. He would tell the hon. Member that they were the better judges of their own business, and they thought they could bring in a Bill and appeal to the House to give them justice, and to carry some such measure. Sir Charles Cameron, dealing with over-crowding in Dublin, and speaking of the housing of the very poor, said—

> "At present the Association for the Housing of the Very Poor, Ltd., own houses containing thirty-six tenements. The houses cost £2,897, and the rents vary from 1s. 3d. to 3s. per week."

He forgot, however, to mention that these were for the very poor, such as seamstresses, earning very small money; and that that did not relieve the congestion which it was the interest of the corporation to try and accomplish. Sir Charles Cameron, in his report, said—

> "In 1901, there were 59,263 families, having on the average four to six members in each; 21,702, or 36·6 per cent. of these families occupied each only one room, and 13,620, or 23 per cent., occupied each two rooms. No such state of things, or anything approaching to it, exists in any other town in the United Kingdom."

He appealed to any hon. Member whether it was any wonder that the white scourge should prevail in Dublin when they considered the condition of these one-room tenements. The Attorney-General would be well aware of what he was saying. These houses were the residences of the old Irish nobility. There were ten to twelve rooms in each of them and in each room there was living five or six of a family—husband, wife and children. These families were in miserable tenements with one w.c. for the lot. He asked the House to consider the case of an unfortunate labourer. He might be out all day in the severity of a wet September, November, or December. He went home, perhaps with a terrible cold, and he might have a good wife and have some little medicine given to him, which perhaps would save him some serious sickness, if it were not for the fact that he had to go from his top back room down to the yard, and thus sowed the seeds of consumption. The House had been engaged in considering a Bill to stop intemperance, but would it not have been much better to have commenced with the housing question and have given working men clean houses in which to live so as to induce them to stay away from the public-houses? It was useless to talk to the unfortunate working man housed in a top back room, with children squalling and crying, and to deny him the opportunity of going to a clean warm house where he could spend an hour or two. He did not advocate their going to public houses, but he did urge that, before attempting to bring in drastic measures to deprive them of the little luxuries that the circumstances of their lives at present permitted, they should deal with the housing question and give them the home to which they were entitled. He had said he would allude to what the corporation had done, and the House would see how wrong the hon. Member was when he talked about the corporation doing nothing, although they had not done all they wished to do. They had only been able to build to house something like 1,042 families. At Bow Lane they had built eighty-one dwellings for the labouring classes at rents of 2s. 10d. per week. What was the cost of building those eighty-one dwellings? They had to acquire a site, clear away whatever was on it, and then erect the dwellings, and the cost was £13,000. At Black Hall Place they had built eighty dwellings costing £13,000; at St. Joseph's Place eighty dwellings costing £26,000; and at Bride's Alley—one of the greatest plague spots in the city—138 dwellings costing £91,000. These were only some of the housing schemes carried out by the corporation. Was it any wonder that the corporation having done so much they could go no further? They had not the power to erect houses to replace those which they had cleared away in insanitary areas, and the result was that a large number of families were huddled together in miserable tenements which were the disgrace of the city. The corporation were alive to their responsibilities, and they asked the House to give them a Bill, the various clauses of which would enable them to go on with the good work they were endeavouring to do, and might induce private capitalists and others to build houses for the accommodation of the working-classes. Exception had been taken to the remission of rates for ten years. The hon. Member for St. Albans had said that it would be a burden upon the existing ratepayers. It would not, because they were not getting any rates from them at present, and, if they waited ten years, they would create ratepayers. Even supposing, however, it was a loss, the ratepayers ought to be willing to bear a little increase for the purpose of the better housing of the people and the better sanitation of the city. The hon. Member had alluded to their going out to the added areas. Dublin was so circumscribed that they had not the accommodation to build not lodging-houses, but suburban villas for the skilled artisan, and those who could afford to pay for them. By going out and erecting dwellings in the added areas they would relieve the congestion which existed in the city, and he could not for the life of him see why any Member should not support the Irish party in their endeavour. The hon. Member for the City of London had taken exception to the Bill, but he had often heard him more strenuous when dealing with Irish matters. He could not help thinking that on this occasion he was only half-hearted and that his opposition was not of a serious character. They were not asking the Imperial Treasury for a penny. They were merely asking that their own resources and funds should be apportioned to this purpose, though it was the State that should be doing it and paying the expenses if necessary, because the State was responsible for the well-being of the community. He would like to give a quotation for the benefit of the hon. Member for Mid Armagh, who he understood was a member of the Taxation of Ireland Committee. His former leader, Colonel Saunderson, whom they all recognised as an honourable opponent and an Irish gentleman, had admitted that Ireland was overtaxed. If they had been overtaxed and came to the House and asked for some portion of the money which it was generally admitted Ireland paid over and above her share, they should not be appealing to deaf ears. The Chancellor of the Exchequer now had the means whereby this money could be got. If the Government found they could not take advantage of the clauses in the Bill, he fell back on the Chancellor of the Exchequer who he thought could not be opposed to the financing of the scheme even out of the British Treasury or from the over-taxation which was unfortunately still levied on their country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had been sympathetic in dealing with the question of over-taxation. Might they appeal to him now that the question came before them on a problem which was so acute, which was ravishing the best youth of their country, which was productive of nothing but sickness, intemperance, and disease—was it too much to ask the Government, if they could not go all the way with them on this Bill, at least to promise to finance the Bill, because finance and finance alone was the means whereby to remedy the grievance.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he wished to say a few words on the Bill because it dealt with a question which very many years ago he had felt called on to bring under the attention of the Government, when the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Dover was Chief Secretary. They had from him a most sympathetic assurance on the subject, and the right hon. Gentleman told them the Government were considering the desirability of introducing legislation similar to the present Bill. When the Member for Dover ceased to be Chief Secretary and Mr. Bryce occupied the post, he was also asked whether anything was to be done in order that proper dwellings might be given to the people of the towns and villages of Ireland. Mr. Bryce also gave them the most sympathetic reply and admitted the necessity for something being done. After he went away Questions were put to the Attorney-General for Ireland—he had put two or three himself—and the right hon. Gentleman had admitted more than once that this was a pressing question and one that the

Government agreed should be dealt with. He had always understood that the only difficulty in dealing with the question was the matter of time. This Bill was apparently going to receive the support of the whole of the Irish representation, and he particularly called the Chief Secretary's attention to a fact which he thought was very significant, that the rejection of the Bill, whether it was a serious matter or not, was moved and seconded by two English Members. Not a single member representing any Irish constituency could be found to incur the responsibility of standing up to oppose the measure, and it remained for the hon. Member for the City of London to deliver one of those speeches which they were accustomed to hear from him on the subject. He thought that that alone ought to convince the right hon. Gentleman that if the Government would take up this question they need fear no serious opposition whatever. The hon. Gentleman who had last spoken with so much authority in reference to the city of Dublin, and who was for some years Lord Mayor of Dublin, had said what was very true when he pointed out that the interests of temperance in Ireland were largely concerned in this matter. He quite agreed with him, and every single person who was interested in temperance legislation in Ireland agreed with him, that perhaps no more could be done even by any Act of Parliament for the promotion of temperance than by providing proper homes for the people. He quite agreed that no matter what legislation was passed in the interests of temperance, nothing could possibly be done which could more promote temperance than the supplying of the people with proper homes. This was not only the opinion of Nationalists, but of representatives of all shades of opinion in Ireland, and all classes and all creeds. In this matter the Chief Secretary would receive, he was certain, the enthusiastic approval and support of representative men in Ireland from all sections of the country, representing all political feelings and all creeds. There was surely no necessity for any Irish Member or for anybody who knew Ireland to impress upon the Government the urgency of this matter. They were all more or less familiar with the unfortunate position occupied by the agricultural labourers in Ireland, but he had seen in many towns greater hardships endured in the matter of housing by the artisans and workers than he had seen in the country, and the Chief Secretary should bear in mind that the class for whom they were pleading had been somewhat neglected by the House. They had had legislation for the farmers and for agricultural labourers, and certainly it was quite time that something practical should be done in the interests of the masses of the people. He did not know any question that was more urgent. He knew absolutely no question on which there was such unanimity of feeling in Ireland, and he appealed strongly to the Chief Secretary to make a speech which would give great hope and encouragement in Ireland and show that the Government were alive to the necessities of the case. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, in one of his amusing speeches, had gone into very minute and detailed criticism as to the financial proposals of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman might deal with that if he thought fit, but he really thought on a Second Reading debate there was no need to go into any detailed criticism of the financial proposals. What they had to deal with was the great central fact that in the towns and villages of Ireland people were scandalously housed, and everybody agreed that something should be done. In Committee upstairs he had no doubt it would be perfectly easy so to arrange the financial proposals of the Bill that they might easily be put into operation. If the Government were not prepared to accept the special proposals made in the Bill, it was the duty of the Government to substitute other proposals for them. It was an extremely hard thing for a party composed entirely of private and unofficial members to set up, with accuracy, machinery in a Bill of this kind. They had not at their disposal the official information which was at the disposal of the Government. They were not hand in hand with the Treasury, and they could only do their best, and if the funds which they pointed out in the Bill were not considered available, surely it was possible for the Government to substitute other funds for them, and at any rate give them some assurance that the Bill would be passed. In passing the Bill the right hon. Gentleman would be doing not only a necessary and humane work, something to promote the interests of temperance about which this Government seemed so anxious, but also something in the interests of the general peace and tranquillity of the country. They often heard in the House of the crime alleged to exist in Ireland. They knew that those statements were grossly exaggerated, but any crime that existed at all was largely to be accounted for by the miserable dens in which the people lived. He would like any Member of the House to be obliged to live for one week in one of those wretched one-room tenements in which so many thousands of the working people in Ireland had to live, and then say if he would feel surprised that people were obliged to go outside at night to public houses and perhaps get into surroundings which might lead them into some disturbance. It was, after all, a hard thing to realise the condition of the people. The hon. Member for Colne Valley, who, the other day, was described as the only Socialist in the House, had spoken in downright terms of the wretchedness and misery of the masses of the people with whom he came in contact. The subject seemed to arouse a good deal of resentment in certain quarters of the House, as if hon. Members did not want to be reminded of some of the realities of life, but he had often thought it would be far better for all interests and all parties if Members realised more clearly the utter wretchedness and misery that existed in the large centres of population in this country and in Ireland. The misery was largely to be accounted for by the fact that the people had not decent places to live in. No man could be expected to be a good citizen and to give his best work to the community and to the country unless he had a decent habitation. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to recognise the extreme gravity of this question and to make a speech which would give hope and encouragement to the hearts of the masses of the people in the towns and villages of Ireland. The matter was above and beyond all questions of party politics. There was no division whatever upon it; it was a question affecting the best interests, the lives, and the happiness of the people, and he appealed to the Government with confidence to deal seriously and promptly with the question. As for the Member for the City of London, he did not believe his Amendment was serious or that he would carry it to a division. If he did he doubted very much if he would get even a dozen Members above the gangway to go into the division lobby with him to say they were opposed to a measure for the better housing of the most miserable and poorest class of the people.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.) said he wished to occupy the time of the House for a very few minutes to try as far as he could to convince the mover and seconder of the rejection of the Bill of the utter absurdity of their position. On that side of the House they were Unionists, and they came to the House of Commons to meet all necessary requirements of Ireland by means of legislation. The moment they came without a single dissenting voice, without a single Irish Member, no matter what place he came from in Ireland, who would go into the lobby and vote against the Bill, they found it was two Unionist Members who said that a united Ireland would not have their support. That was a position in which they could hardly defend the Union. He could have understood it coming from the opposite side. He would say that 75 per cent. of the questions affecting Ireland ought to be considered quite apart from political considerations. Unfortunately they were often divided on small matters to the detriment of a full and proper consideration of larger questions. They had legislation for the tenant farmer and agricultural labourer. This proposal would help to give a healthier existence to the artisans in the towns and add to their physical and moral welfare. He hoped the Bill would therefore be read a second time and revised in Committee to meet the objections that had been raised. It had been said that if the principles of the Bill were applied to Ireland England and Scotland would ask for them also. That to his mind was a strong reason why the Bill should pass. It was certain that if the Bill did pass Irishmen would help English and Scottish Members to pass similar measures for their countries, and they did not care whether they were introduced by the Secretary for Scotland or the President of the Local Government Board. The hon. Member for Mid Armagh in making his very well-reasoned speech, full of detail, did not mean to imply that Belfast did not require better housing. What they wanted to do was to try and prevent disease by a reform in the housing law. It should not be overlooked that temperance reform would be greatly assisted if they had better housing. Let them take the case of a working man earning 17s. or 18s. a week and living in one room with perhaps a wife and four or five children. The man had probably been working all day in an atmosphere not very congenial, and was it to be wondered at if he was not tempted to remain too long in the atmosphere of his own family under such circumstances? Both from an Imperial and from a humane point of view they should not only pass the second reading of this Bill, but they should try to make a good Bill out of it in order that the working classes might be led to believe that after all the House of Commons was capable of legislating for the good of the people as a whole. This was a subject in regard to which political bias should not be allowed to intervene and party politics should be kept out. In the city of Belfast better housing was required just as much as in the city of Dublin, and they were quite prepared to do all they could in that direction. He was sure that if from the Government point of view some alterations in the Bill were necessary none of them would object. He appealed, therefore, to those on his own side to let them have the Bill with as much unanimity and as much good grace as possible.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) strongly dissented from the view which had been expressed by the hon. Member for North Derry that, because the Liberal Benches were not well filled, therefore members of that Party were unsympathetic to the reform aimed at in the Bill. That was the exact opposite of the truth. The best way of showing approval of measures in that House was to help in the division lobby, and he did not think, when they came to vote, that the Liberal Party would be found lacking in their support of the Bill. It would be a very curious thing if the Liberal Party did not support this Bill, because it was based much on the same lines and framed in the same spirit as the Housing of the Working Classes Bill introduced in that House

early in 1906. That Bill had been made part of the Government programme last year, and it was one of the principal measures to be proceeded with during the present session. He therefore desired to assure the Irish Members of the warmest sympathy for them from Liberal Members in their efforts to pass this Bill into law, since it proceeded upon the sound principle that housing reform was a great public purpose, of so much moment to the Community that the State might, and ought to be asked to, step in and help it forward by financial aid, though the form in which that aid should be given was well worthy of discussion. Although there might be some objection to the financial proposals in the Bill, that was no reason whatever why it should be rejected upon the Second Reading. He hoped that the House would approve of the Bill and let it go to Committee in order to have the financial and other details dealt with.

MR. GWYNN (Galway) said it was no surprise to him to find all the representatives from Ireland in agreement in regard to this measure. If a Bill like this which was approved of by all sections of the Irish Members, by the Liberal Party, and by the Labour Party failed to pass into law, then it was obvious that there was an irresistible claim made out against the Union from an Irish point of view. Assuming that an Irish Parliament existed, then this Bill would be passed with the general assent of all Irishmen. He happened to represent the town of Galway, which was one of those Irish urban constituencies where at the present time the population lived in squalor in houses which were once solidly built, but which had now been turned into tenements under miserable conditions and were as bad as could be found anywhere in the country. The standard of living had been changed and improved in the countryside in Ireland by land legislation, but nothing had been done for the towns; they appeared to have been left behind in the political movement. The standard of living in the towns had not been raised, and the object of this Bill was to raise that standard. He joined in the appeal which had been made to the Chief Secretary to give them some of those smaller measures like the one under discussion, which were so urgently needed in Ireland.

MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) expressed sympathy with the promoters of the Bill. Everybody who had seen the appalling overcrowding and disgusting surroundings of the inhabitants of large towns in Ireland must see the necessity for an amendment of the housing law. He thought the hon. Member for the City of London had spoken without that knowledge which Irish Members and Irishmen possessed in regard to this burning question.

SIR F. BANBURY said his objection was to the financial proposals, which were unsound.

MR. GUINNESS said the financial proposals would be dealt with in Committee. Even if the financial proposals were fallacious, that was no reason why they should not unanimously support the principle that better housing accommodation in Ireland was required. The great trouble they had in England in regard to the housing problem was the difficulty of borrowing money cheaply, but in Ireland that difficulty was even greater. He believed that this Bill contained the germ of proposals which might remedy that difficulty. The hon. Member for East Clare had said that they ought not to think too much about the financial proposals in the Bill. All he wished to say upon that point was that if a heavy burden was thrown upon the ratepayers, there would be a reaction which would do more harm than the Bill would do good. The most inadvisable proposal he had noticed in the Bill was the proposition to extend the period for the repayment of loans to eighty years. No doubt the framers of the Bill had put that in following the precedent of the Act of 1903, but he wished to remind them that the Local Government Board never allowed a period of eighty years for buildings. They had in certain cases allowed local authorities to borrow money repayable in eighty years for land, but that proved to be a very unnecessary complication of their accounts, and it had been found better to leave the period of repayment at sixty years. He therefore hoped that this extension would not be embodied, because he felt that loans for rural housing ought to be repaid in at least sixty years. If eighty years was too long for urban houses, surely it was far too long a period for rural houses Another important point which had been raised by the hon. Member for Derry was the power of undertaking housing schemes outside the district of the local authority. He differed with his hon. friend on that point, for he regarded that as one of the most valuable provisions of the Bill. In crowded urban areas it was impossible to pull down dwellings except at an enormous expense, and local authorities were often unwilling to make closing orders until they were satisfied that the displaced population could be found suitable accommodation elsewhere. Very often the only way to provide that accommodation without placing an undue burden upon the rates was by going to some undeveloped district connected with the town by means of trams and other means of transit. The London County Council and the old Metropolitan Board of Works had spent over £800,000 writing down the value of areas which had been cleared for rehousing. One way of relieving the rates was to sell the cleared land in the towns for commercial purposes, and erect dwellings on undeveloped land in districts that were connected with the towns by tramways. They would then be able to invest the proceeds in providing cheap and healthy dwellings in the suburbs. As to Clause 11 which proposed that local authorities should be enabled to remit rates for a period not exceeding ten years on new housing accommodation, the hon. Member for North Dublin had stated that that principle was embodied in legislation for England. He himself was fairly conversant with the housing Acts, and he was almost certain that there was no provision of that kind.

MR. CLANCY said he interrupted the hon. baronet the Member for the City of London several times for the purpose of correcting statements made by him. He now desired to modify what he stated as to there being a precedent for the remission of rates. He was alluding to Section 5 of the English Act, and what it did was to enable land to be let on lease to associations, subject to certain modifications with respect to rating.

MR. GUINNESS said he thought the provision in this Bill was rather a dangerous one, because certain sections of the ratepayers who were living in insanitary surroundings and paying high rates might resent having to pay still higher rates to make cheaper rents for people who were better housed than themselves. He hoped that proposal would be considered in Committee. He thought there was no greater need in Ireland than for an improvement of the sanitary conditions under which the people lived. If the House would pass this Bill, or one on the same lines, enabling local authorities to have the advantage of cheap money they would do a very great work for the contentment of Ireland. He appealed to the hon. baronet the Member for the City of London not to press the Amendment.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am sure that the House will rejoice at the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down, who is taking an hereditary interest in this great question. I hope that for many years the House will enjoy the valuable assistance of the growing knowledge of the hon. Member upon these questions. It would be an insult to my intelligence, which is no great matter, and to the intelligence of the whole House to suggest that it would be possible to refuse a Second Reading to a measure having for its object the better housing of the working classes in Ireland which has received such a happy and such an unusual amount of support from all quarters of the House. About that I imagine there will be no difference of opinion. The state of things in Ireland with reference to overcrowding, and all its terrible consequences, is very bad indeed. I am not going to repeat the figures which were given by the hon. and learned Member for North Dublin. He reminded the House that the great city of Dublin is twice as bad in these matters as the city of Glasgow. Most people in England and Scotland are aware that the city of Glasgow, energetic and magnificent as have been the efforts made by its corporation, has long enjoyed an unenviable reputation in this matter; but I do not think it has yet brought home sufficiently to the minds of the people of England and Scotland that the condition of things in the city of Dublin in this matter is quite as bad. Since the census of 1901 there may have been a little improvement, but there cannot have been very much. The figures of that census showed there were 59,263 tenements in Dublin, and of these 21,747 were tenements of one room each. Such a proportion is, I am sorry to say, most remarkable, and entirely without parallel. I am not going to add to the volume of rhetoric that has been expended on this question. Most of us know of the terrible consequences that follow from such a state of congestion, and nobody can wonder that people brought up in it are sickly and unhealthy. Our bounden duty is surely to take whatever steps we can to remedy such a state of affairs. I came into the House yesterday just before dinner in an exhausted state after an unusually prolonged interview with the Treasury, and I found the House interested, as well they might be, in some very fine dialectical display between the Leader of the Opposition and my right hon. friend, the Secretary of State for War; and, as far as I could understand the question, the Leader of the Opposition was putting a problem of this character: Supposing we were at war, and had just sent out an expeditionary force, and just after the dispatch of that expeditionary force, which deprived us of the services of our regular soldiers, another Power perfectly fresh, and hitherto inactive, effected a landing with 100,000 men upon our shores, and, having thereby been able to secure a right of entry, poured in large numbers of horse, foot, and artillery, at a time when our Territorial Forces, Militia and Yeomanry, constructed on a Volunteer basis, had not had their six months' preliminary training, what was going to happen? I am not under-rating the importance of the inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman was making. Neither I nor anybody else can tell him what would happen, but I am perfectly certain that everything would depend upon the pluck and the condition and the character of the inhabitants of these islands, and that if we were able to respond to the bidding, the exhortations, and the examples of twenty or thirty Gambettas we should be able, in these circumstances, to give a very good account of ourselves. But surely a far more important question than the consideration of a hypothesis of that character, though I do not disparage its importance, is to secure that the people of the country should be in such a state of health and animation as, in the first place, to be worth preserving, and in the second place, of being able to defend themselves against the invaders. I dare say the commercial gentlemen, the men of stocks and shares, scrips and debentures, would be in some room in the City totting up the amount of indemnity that would require to be paid in order to secure our release from the presence of the invaders. Money, we know, has no nationality. It would be the people themselves on whom we should have to depend for our defence, and therefore we are all agreed that it is a preliminary duty, in providing for a remote contingency of that kind, to see that the people of this country are brought up under such conditions as to make them capable of offering a stern defence. I am happy to think that the people will fight for their country, though they live in it under conditions of dirt, disease, and misery, just as people are prepared to fight for a liberty which they never enjoyed, and for a religion which they do not understand. All those things are perfectly true, and it is far better that defence should be carried on by people of health, strength, and character. We are all agreed that there is no more important question than this affecting the housing of our people, concerned as it is with their strength and character. But I will pass away from that; — [OPPOSITION cheers]—yes, but I can assure hon. Gentlemen that I take no pleasure in addressing them, and I am perfectly willing to pass away from that or any other subject, but it is altogether impossible to dissociate the question of housing from its financial aspect, and I agree in some respects with the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London. I think he was perfectly entitled to call the attention of the House to the financial aspects of the question. I say at once that there is no use in this House expressing the sympathy which I know is generally felt with the condition of things in Irish towns and villages unless it is willing to show that sympathy in some practical form. We may talk for weeks and months of the evils which arise from overcrowding and from people living to this terrible extent in one-room houses—four, five, six, and sometimes even seven or eight in one room—but there is no use in sympathising over the overcrowding in tenements unless we are able to put forward some practical suggestions for dealing with it. The difficulty arises in Ireland owing to the poverty of the country. The poverty of the small towns is undoubtedly very great. The indebtedness of the Irish towns is £8,806,476, the valuation £4,465,808, and the borrowing powers of the towns is limited by the Public Health Act to twice the assessable valuation. Therefore it will be seen that these towns have already borrowed pretty well up to their legal powers, and that even if they were given power to increase their loans they would find it exceedingly difficult to obtain other similar loans which are undoubtedly necessary to enable them to put into operation the statutory powers in regard to drainage and water supply. You are dealing with towns which are already mortgaged up to the hilt. The rates in Irish towns are already oppressive. In sixty-one out of the 110 towns the rates are over 6s. and in others from 6s. to 10s. in the £. Therefore it is obvious, as everybody will see at once, that there is not much use hoping to excite profound interest in this most vital question if it is accompanied by an assurance that the rates will be heavily or largely increased. You have to deal with that state of things. How are you going to effect, even slowly and gradually, the necessary rebuilding of proper and decent tenements? You cannot divorce this question from finance, and there is no use coming here and saying that you recognise the evil, unless you are prepared to look the financial problem in the face and see how it is to be done. Therefore, I quite agree with the hon. Member for the City of London that the financial proposals of this or any other Bill have to be considered, but they have to be considered with a view to carrying out the reform. Otherwise, all our talk becomes mere empty words, without force or substance. The Bill, apart from the financial proposals, contains most excellent provisions. I agree with the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds that one or two of them require close examination. I cannot as at present advised agree with the eighty years period, which, I am sure, is too long in anything connected with house property, which is very often badly built. That is one reason for entrusting these matters to local authorities, because in that way you, at all events, avoid the jerry-builder. The figures as to Belfast are, I agree, as compared with Dublin, satisfactory; but I have been told that Belfast, though I have no personal acquaintance with the locality, has suffered very badly at the hands of the jerry-builder. I have been told that a number of the two-storey houses to which the hon. Member referred are badly built on undrained ground, and that, although there is immediate provision for the bulk of the population, the condition in the immediate future will be by no means so rosy as from the figures it appears to be. Even now the jerry-builder, whom one might have thought we had got rid of, is fully at work in our midst. Even in Liverpool, within the last few years, jerry-built, congested houses, badly constructed, have been built without any proper air provision, over entire portions of that city. I am not going to waste time over details. If this Bill passes the Second Reading, as I hope it will, without a division, it will be referred to a Committee which will have power to consider these points. I desire to refer for a moment to the financial proposals. With regard to the proposal that £5,000,000 should be borrowed from the Post Office deposits, I find that the Treasury is strong, and I think there will be an insuperable objection to any proposal of that kind. For my own part I think that that channel is closed to the object which we are all agreed is one of imperative necessity. But still I recognise the good arguments put forward by the Treasury in objecting to these funds which have been deposited with them by the nation being lent upon security which is certainly not easily realisable. The hon. and learned Member for North Dublin said with perfect truth that, so far as the depositors were concerned, they would not mind what use the nation made of the money because the credit of the nation was behind them, and that was good enough for them; but that is hardly the way in which people who take charge of other people's money looked at a question of this sort. The Treasury is bound to look at the position of the taxpayers and the general credit of the country, and to see that these large sums are invested in securities of a high character. The Treasury have never agreed that these Post Office deposits should be invested in securities of this kind, and therefore on that part of the proposal I am not in any way disposed to agree to it. But there must be some other means of finding cheap money. Of course, as things are in England and Scotland, those who desire to embark in undertakings of this sort have obtained their money from the Local Loans Commissioners. The hon. Gentleman has stated the terms on which these loans are made, from three and a quarter to four per cent., having regard to the number of years during which the loan remains outstanding. These terms have been reduced within the last twelve months, and if any further reduction was made in the rates of interest it would have to be practically a general reduction made over all parts of the United Kingdom, and not one made merely for Ireland. And, in fact, the Treasury would much sooner give outright a grant-in-aid than tamper with or alter their present rule as to the lending of money on the Local Loans Account. Then, with regard to the Dormant Suitors' Fund, there is at the moment a slight controversy as to what is the exact amount of that fund. My hon. friend the Member for North Dublin has taken great personal pains to ascertain by inquiry in the right quarter what that fund amounts to, but his figures do not exactly coincide with the Treasury figures; they are rather less. Still, they represent a substantial sum. The Treasury see no particular reason why that fund, so far as it is proved to be available, should not be used in the manner suggested. I do not know what view the legal fraternity may be disposed to take of this matter. I am a lawyer myself, but I cannot for the life of me see why it should be supposed that the unfortunate suitors had such regard for the cause that might have ruined them as to make it essential that the moneys which they wanted to get, but have never got, should be spent on legal processes. Lawyers having got these funds, and the Treasury having got control over them, it was supposed that the money should be spent on legal matters. A very handsome and charming library at the

Four Courts, he was delighted to say, had been built out of the Suitors' Fund in the time of the present Secretary of State for India, and in that beautiful room I have seen the right hon. Gentleman the junior Member for Dublin University, pursuing his lucrative calling along with the distinguished County Court Judge for Clare. But I think the time is coming when the rest of Ireland should get a benefit from the fund, and I am glad to think that the Treasury are fully in accord with me in this matter, and do not see why the money should not be invested in trust securities, and the interest from it used by way of easing the burden and making up what I am afraid will be a very considerable deficit between the obligation to pay interest on the loan and the rents from the houses themselves. I do not think we can rely much upon average rent. The hon. Member for North Dublin pointed out quite accurately that sometimes these rents go up to 7s. or 8s. a week, but in order to meet this problem they must go down to as low as 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week. It would, therefore, be hazardous to say what the average rent would be. Nobody knows how much you should deduct for repairs on these houses, empties, and the like. Thirty per cent. is a very considerable figure, but some landlords say that it is not enough for the purpose. We come now to the quit rents. I am not going to say that that is not a question upon which the Committee might not desire a little more knowledge than is already possessed as to what these quit rents are, what they come to and how they are dealt with in Ireland as compared with other parts of the country. We are told that they come to the Treasury now, and are treated as an Imperial sum, otherwise they would be the private property of the Sovereign, and that they are distributed over all parts of the country alike. I am not sure that it will not be found that these quit rents have to some extent been ear-marked for the purpose of the country whence they are derived.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: For each country except Ireland.

MR. BIRRELL: I do not know about that, but it is a little dangerous to go into. I am quite anxious for the inquiry for my own sake, because I do not like to be in a state of confusion and ignorance on such a subject, but I think it is an inquiry which may not necessarily result in a satisfactory answer as far as Ireland is concerned. I am disposed to think, however, that quit rents can hardly for the present be regarded as likely to be a fund available for the purpose we all have at heart. The view that the Treasury and which certainly I have come to is that when you have borrowed the money as cheaply as you can get it, and after you have taken the annual revenue from the Suitors' Fund, whatever it may be—one good thing leads to another, and Treasuries come and go, and new opportunities occur for re-consideration of previous decisions—the great thing is to get a start with this measure—but I cannot conceal from myself and the custodians of the Treasury cannot conceal from themselves that after all there will still be a deficit to be met in some way. The view we take is that, heavy as the burden of rates is, it would not be a wise thing to enter into any bargain which would prevent reliance to some extent, at any rate, on assistance from the rates. That may seem a proposition which amounts to a declaration to doing nothing; but, this undiscovered, unascertained, and at present unascertainable deficit will have to be met in some way between the liability of the ratepayer and the willingness of the Exchequer to come to Ireland's assistance in this matter. The question will not be lost sight of; that is the most I can say, but I feel satisfied that when it really comes to the point, and if a vote could be taken in a crowded House, the House would not be at all indisposed to be generous in its treatment of this great question. That time may come, after this Act has got into operation, and I am sure that the Irishmen forming a united party may rely on the support of a large majority in this House. I hope I have discharged the duties of the Secretary to the Treasury in the matter, and at the same time made it perfectly plain to the House that the Government fully recognise their obligations in this matter. In fact, it is a matter of some little shame to me personally that there is not a Government measure on this subject. I find that more than thirty years ago a Commission was appointed to define new municipal boundaries, it always having been thought that no really successful scheme of housing could be carried on without the areas being extended. Irish towns have unfortunately very restricted areas, although some have areas of very wide extent, and legislation in regard to these areas was recommended as urgent. Thirty years have passed and nothing has been done, and the conclusion has been forced upon me that there are enough areas of work in Ireland for Irish purposes alone to occupy the attention of a separate Parliament—I do not say whether it is made up of Irishmen, or Esquimaux, but of those who would have time to devote themselves to the consideration of Irish affairs. At present there is a hopeless block, but, certainly if there is a measure the Government might have been expected to take up, it is such a one as this. I am only too conscious of my inability to do so, and I can only express my thanks to the two hon. Members opposite for having introduced this Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said that as the Treasury agreed with him as to the financial proposals of this Bill, he did not propose to put the House to the trouble of a division, and would allow his Amendment to be negatived.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Before the Amendment is actually withdrawn I wish to say a few words. I am not surprised that the Chief Secretary for Ireland felt some sense of shame that this is not a Government measure. Years and years ago the right hon. Member for Dover promised to introduce legislation on this matter, and Mr. Bryce gave us the same promise, although they always put in the condition "at a convenient time." The Chief Secretary does not now, of course, fully accept all our proposals, but on the whole I am disposed not to be dissatisfied with the speech which the right hon. Gentleman has made. The difficulties in the way of dealing with this question, as the right hon. Gentleman showed with perfect clearness, is the fact that these local bodies in Ireland have their resources so mortgaged and have to borrow at so high a rate of interest that it is impossible for them to deal effectively with the housing problem. We propose to deal with it by enabling them to get money cheap from the Post Office deposits. We thought, and still think, that that was a most advisable way to proceed, but the right hon. Gentleman speaking for the Treasury—and I may say in parenthesis that I would be glad if he spoke oftener for the Treasury—says that our scheme is impossible, that they cannot agree to it, that we should go for the necessary funds to carry out the housing schemes to the ordinary source, the Public Works Loans Commissioners and that public bodies must get their money at the current rate of interest, which we are told is to be reduced. But if the rate of interest is not to be reduced, the right hon. Gentleman says that the difficulty may be met by a grant-in-aid. From our own point of view it does not matter where we get the money so long as we get it cheap. The right hon. Gentleman proposes that we should be enabled to meet any deficit by allowing some portion of the liability to remain on the rates. I agree that the people in the country parts of Ireland have shown, and still show their willingness that a proportion of the liability for the provision of houses for the labouring classes should be put on the ratepayers, and the same principle ought to prevail in towns so long as the rate of interest is not prohibitive, and the liability is limited. The right hon. Gentleman also says that the liability might be further met by the income derived from the Dormant Suitors' Fund. We do not know precisely what it amounts it, but so far as it goes the right hon. Gentleman has announced that the Treasury has consented to handing over the income from that fund to be applied to the reducing of that deficit. But the right hon. Gentleman says that even after that there is certain to be some remaining deficit, and I understood him to say that he and the Treasury are not indisposed to consider in a sympathetic spirit the desirability of the Treasury itself coming forward to meet the rest of the liability on the deficit. Now if that scheme is carried out I honestly believe that we shall have succeeded in making a good beginning in this business. I agree we cannot expect to look too far ahead, because even in two years the constitution and the views of the Treasury may be changed. We shall feel satisfied if we have set this machine going, and the deadlock which at present exists is removed, and this blessed work is started. If the scheme which the right hon. Gentleman suggests becomes law, then I believe we shall have succeeded in setting the work in motion. Therefore I am not disposed to be dissatisfied with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman or the attitude which the Treasury has taken up, though I must say I would prefer the wider views which have been put forward. There is just this I should wish to say before I sit down: this is an urgent matter and there is no reason why this Bill should not pass into law this session. There may be technical difficulties, I have not looked into the matter recently, but I am not sure how far it is possible for private Members in Committee to propose financial clauses. I do not know whether there is any difficulty from the point of view of order. I mention this matter now, because if such difficulties do arise the Government ought to take steps to remedy that state of things and regularise the proceedings of the Committee. It would be useless for our Bill to go to a Committee if we then found that it could not be passed into law because of some technical difficulty of that kind. There is another matter in reference to the Bill passing into law which I should like to mention. It may be necessary for the Government to give it facilities when it comes back to this House, but of course that is a somewhat nominal thing, because when this Bill has passed through a Committee with universal agreement, and comes back to this House with these financial clauses limited in the direction indicated by the right hon. Gentleman, then I am sure that even the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, will not be disposed to kill the Bill simply by insisting upon prolonged discussion.

SIR F. BANBURY: I cannot say until I have seen the Bill.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I am sure from the hon. Baronet's attitude this afternoon that he will not do that; but I want the Bill passed this session, and it is possible for the Government to see that it does by regularising our proceedings and then by giving the time necessary for passing it through all its stages. If they do that they will confer a great boon upon Ireland, and I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will feel that a load of obligation has been lifted off his shoulders and those of the Government. Under these circumstances I think we have every reason to be satisfied with the debate.

MR. BIRRELL: In regard to the request of the hon. and learned Gentleman I will communicate his views to the acting Leader of the House. Of course, I am not in a position to give a promise of that kind.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL (Dublin University) said he only wished to intervene for a moment to get an explanation of a matter in which he thought there was some difference of view between the hon. and learned Member for Waterford and the right hon. Gentleman in expressing the determination of the Treasury. It would be a great misfortune indeed if, in connection with a movement of this kind, heartily supported as it was from all sides of the House, and particularly by representatives from Ireland, there should be any misunderstanding as to the position taken up by His Majesty's Government in Ireland, because too often an interpretation was put upon speeches made by right hon. Gentlemen who had to look after the Treasury as well as their own particular Department, and afterwards the suggestion was made that there had been some breach of faith on the part of the Government. He thought they should definitely understand what was said on this occasion. He did not understand the right hon. Gentleman as giving the pledge which the hon. Gentleman for Waterford said he thought had been given. Let him explain. The hon. and learned Member said that he understood the speech of the Chief Secretary as meaning that even assuming that the Suitors Fund was of the magnitude that the hon. Member for North Dublin in his able speech had stated, and that there was a certain liability to be cast upon the rates, there must necessarily be a deficiency, and he (Mr. Redmond) understood the Chief Secretary as giving a pledge that that would be made good by a Treasury grant.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: No; I said that I understood that the question of whether the Treasury should come to the aid of the local authorities would be sympathetically considered by the Government and by the Treasury.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said he thought that that was the correct interpretation, but he could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that he did use language which conveyed to them in that part of the House that he understood that there was a distinct promise given by the right hon. Gentleman that whatever the deficiency was it would be made good by the Treasury.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: No, no.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL, continuing, said that if the understanding was that it was only a pious hope or expression of opinion on the part of the hon. and learned Member that the deficiency would be considered by the Government, he thought that was correct, and he only rose to prevent any misunderstanding arising, because it would be a pity that the success of this movement, happily begun under such auspices, should become another cause of allegation against His Majesty's Government of ill-faith towards the Irish people. He entirely agreed with what had fallen from the Chief Secretary, and recognised that he had dealt with the matter in a generous and liberal spirit.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) thought the hon. and learned Member for Waterford was a little unfair in claiming the entire credit of this measure for his own Party.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I did not claim anything. You claim everything.

MR. T. L. CORBETT claimed that his colleagues from Ulster were quite as keen for a measure of this kind as the Party of the hon. and learned Member, and the latter might have given them credit for that interest. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had stated that Irishmen had a certain claim at all events when they were united to make appeals to the Government, but he thought that the right hon. Gentleman and the Attorney-General ought to limit their language in future, because the Attorney-General had described his fellow-countrymen as West African savages, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland had gone a little further and referred to them as Esquimaux.

MR. BIRRELL: I did not call them Esquimaux. What I said was that even a separate Parliament of Esquimaux might be very profitably employed in dealing with Irish affairs for six years.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said that as an Irish Member he objected to the term Esquimaux being applied to the Irish nation. That was a picturesque phrase which might suit the literary taste of the right hon. Gentleman, but neither it nor the picturesque language of the Attorney-General should be used in regard to Ireland.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I did not use the picturesque language he attributes to me. I never said that the people of Ireland were West African savages.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: We all know that.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) dissociated himself from the attitude of the hon. Baronet the junior Member for the City of London towards this Bill. No doubt he was an authority on finance, but he wished the hon. Baronet would show some greater regard for men, women, and children, and less for the money bags, whether of London, Edinburgh, or Dublin. The Irish experience in this matter had revealed a sore spot in the national life of Ireland, and therefore in the national life of the United Kingdom. It was necessary to devise exceptional legislation for these sore spots in the national life; and where his Party differed in this respect from their Socialist fellow members was in thinking that these were only exceptional measures, the need for which would pass away, and Ireland would become a credit to the country, being restored to its normal health. Long might the dear little shamrock, the symbol of three in one (he used the figure in no theological sense), be the symbol of national unity, and then they could go on wearing the green for ever.

Question "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

BREACHES OF BYE-LAWS BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme), in moving the Second Reading said that the Bill was a small measure, designed to bring up the practice of all benches of magistrates to the level of the best. Its object was to compel all benches of magistrates to give time for the payment of fines inflicted for breaches of bye-laws. At present the best benches gave time for such payment, but it was by no means universally the case. In answer to a Question put by him to the Home Secretary on February 12th, it was stated that 10,000 persons were imprisoned in England and Wales during 1907 in default of payment of fines for breaches of bye-laws. The object of the Bill was to reduce the number so committed. It said that "a person with a settled place of abode shall not be committed to prison in default of payment of fines, costs and damages in respect of a breach of bye-laws, until a period of seven days or such longer period as the Secretary of State may prescribe, except the Court shall have reasonable cause to believe that the said person will abscond during such period." That clause provided for the case of the vagabond with no settled place of abode, and for cases where the police thought the person would abscond, but it compelled all benches of magistrates in other cases to give a period of time for payment of fees as was already done by nine out of every ten benches in the country. The result of the measure would be that the prison population would be diminished, that fewer people would take a first step in connection with prison life, and that more money would be paid as fines to the public revenue. Looked at from the point of view of the community the result of the Bill must be good. There was no legitimate reason why the measure should be confined to breaches of bye-laws. It was possible in regard to this compulsory giving of time to extend it afterwards to all fines made in lieu of imprisonment. This Bill was, however, at present confined to bye-laws, and there was a second clause which enabled the Secretary of State to give different periods for different bye-laws and different localities. The one argument he wished to urge in favour of the Bill was this. At present the persons who had to go to prison in default of the payment of a fine were only the poorest classes of the community. An ordinary well-to-do person convicted of breach of a bye-law paid his fine easily; it was the case of a poor man who had not the money at hand to pay the fine that would be affected by this Bill. If he were given time to pay he would need a week or a fortnight to get the money together and keep himself from going to prison. He was quite sure that the House if it paid any attention to this subject would see that the question of getting poor people to pay their fines instead of going to prison was one which should receive its unanimous support. He therefore asked the Government to let them have an opportunity of going to a Committee with the Bill and passing it into law, this session. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) thought that the hon. Member who had introduced this Bill in such a precise manner would have done much better had he not made use of one expression to the effect that this was the first step, and that he expected, if the Bill became law, steps would be taken to carry it forward in other directions. He would have done better if he had said that the Bill was an innocuous one, and had appealed to the

House to allow it to go through, because, after all, it was a small measure. But when the hon. Member said that it was the introduction of the thin edge of the wedge which the Radical Party intended to use in order to extend its provisions to all other branches of the law, then he thought he made rather a mistake. Some of them on those benches might have viewed the Bill with leniency on account of its small scope, but if it was simply a stepping-stone the matter was different. [Mr. WEDGWOOD dissented.] It was all very well for the hon. Member to shake his head now. It was easy to say one thing one moment and another the next, but he had taken the words down, and that was what they indicated. Besides that the hon. Member had urged the Bill as a measure to equalise justice all over the country. But it did not do that, because the hon. Member had deliberately said that the Home Secretary might prescribe different rules for different bye-laws in different parts of the country. In other words the hon. Gentleman took power away from the magistrates and put it in the hands of the Home Secretary, who might put Yorkshire in a different position from any other county. In Ireland the Chief Secretary might, he supposed, provide one condition of things for Cork and another for Waterford, and the result would be that the very inequality which the hon. Member complained of in the exercise of the discretion of the magistrates as to whether the fine should be paid in Court or time given to persons to pay it would be perpetrated.

And it being Five of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday next.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [LORDS].

Ordered, That the Lords Message [19th March] relative to the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords] be now considered. *Captain Craig.*

Lords' Message considered accordingly—

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Five Members be appointed to join with a Committee to be appointed by the Lords, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of 19th March, to consider the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords].

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Godfrey Baring, Mr. Idris, Mr. Vincent Kennedy, and Sir John Batty Tuke.

Ordered that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.

Ordered, That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords Committee as proposed by their Lordships.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

LOTTERIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS.

Resolved, That it is expedient that a Select Committee of five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and inquire into the Law (1) as to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures, and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what amendments if any, in the Law are necessary or desirable.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at two minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 23rd March, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) [H.L.]

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit again till Wednesday next.

Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill.—Read 3^a, and passed.

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.]; Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PETITION.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition against: of Falkirk and District Landlord's Association; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TROPICAL DISEASES RESEARCH FUND.

Report of the Advisory Committee for the Tropical Diseases Research Fund, for the year 1907.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3964. Netherlands (Amsterdam).

CONGESTION IN IRELAND.

Tenth Report of the Commissioners, with appendix (minutes of evidence taken in counties Galway and Roscommon from the 18th September to 4th October 1907), and documents relating thereto.

IRISH LAND PURCHASE FINANCE.

Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into Irish Land Purchase Finance in connection with the provision of funds required for the purposes of the Irish Land Act, 1903.

POST OFFICE.

Agreement for an exchange of money orders between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the German Empire, dated 9th January 1908, 8th February 1908.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Account of moneys received and paid by the Chamberlain of the City of London for the year 1907, also an account of extraordinary works executed, other than general repairs for the same period.

GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

Return of receipts and expenditure of the General Medical Council and of the branch councils, also of receipts and expenditure of the Dental Registration Fund, for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.]

Message from the Commons to acquaint this House that they have appointed a Committee of Five Members to join with the Committee appointed by this House, as mentioned in their Lordships' Message of Thursday last, to consider the Bill, and they have ordered that their Committee do meet the Lords' Committee in Committee Room A. to-morrow at Three o'clock, as proposed by this House.

LOTTERIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS.

Message from the Commons that they have come to the following Resolution to which they desire the concurrence of this House, viz., that it is expedient that a Select Committee of Five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of an equal number of Lords to consider and inquire into the law: (1) As to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) As to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what Amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable.

NEW BILL.

LAND AND PROPERTY TRANSFER BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to transfer all private property to a Commission—Was presented by the Lord Wemyss (*E. Wemyss*); read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 34.)

EX-SOLDIERS AND CIVIL PENSION.

*THE EARL OF ERROLL rose to ask His Majesty's Government whether any steps were being taken to give effect to the recommendation of Sir Edward Ward's Committee, viz., that the service of ex-soldiers employed in the Civil Service should be allowed to count towards civil pension. The noble Earl said: My Lords, the object of the Question which stands in my name is to call attention to a grievance under which a large number of very deserving men are at present suffering, and to express a hope that the Government may see their way to remedy this state of affairs, which inflicts considerable injustice on men who have spent many of the best years of their lives in the service of the State. I cannot do better than read to your Lordships one or two extracts from the Report of the Committee on Civil Employment of Ex-soldiers and Sailors, which will put the case clearly before your Lordships, and show, I hope, how injuriously the Regulations as they stand act on the interests of ex-soldiers and sailors. In Paragraph 43 the Committee say—

> "At present ex-soldiers and sailors who, having been discharged from the Army or Navy without pension, subsequently obtain an established position in the Civil Service, are debarred from reckoning any of their military or naval service for pension on final retirement. The disadvantage of such an arrangement to the ex-soldier and sailor can best be illustrated in the following manner, viz.:—'A' joins the Civil Service at the age of nineteen, and 'B' joins the Army at the same age, and obtains on his discharge at the age of twenty-six, a Civil Service appointment. Both men, their total service being equal, are superannuated, at the age of sixty; 'A,' whose service has been entirely Civil, receives the maximum pension of forty-sixtieths, and 'B,' not being able to count his military service, only thirty-four-sixtieths of his salary. In point of fact, the longer the Army service the greater will be the disproportion in favour of the civilian. Such an arrangement as this is in our opinion inequitable and rests upon a purely arbitrary basis, for Army or Navy service, with its attendant risks, should surely be regarded as at least equivalent in its pension-bearing value to Civil Service; and the existence of a rule which declines to recognise the former as such is not unnaturally viewed by those concerned as unjust."

The Committee go on to say that this principle has already been recognised in some cases. They state that—

> "An amalgamation of Civil and Naval Service for civil superannuation is admitted in the case of certain shipwright boys who engage to serve for twelve years from the age of eighteen in the Fleet and are then transferred to the Civil Establishment of His Majesty's Dockyards, being held liable to sea service in emergency up to the age of fifty, and for this purpose enrolled in the Royal Fleet Reserve. 'Sea time' is allowed in all such cases to reckon for civil superannuation. Similar provision is made in regard to dockyard riggers and seamen in yard craft by Order in Council of 16th April, 1861, and the Civil servant who joins the Police carries with him his Civil Service towards pensions, under the Police Act, 1890."

Then the Committee proceed—

> "We recommend that similar treatment should be accorded to ex-soldiers and sailors who, having received no Army or Navy pension, are eventually appointed to pensionable posts in the Civil Service, and that, if there is not power under the existing law to carry out this recommendation, early steps should be taken to obtain legislative authority to remedy this legitimate grievance."

The Committee call attention to the fact that in 1891 the Postmaster-General, with the sanction of the Treasury—

> "Made a regulation that telegraph messengers in order to be come postmen should first serve for five years with the colours. At the age of eighteen they were to be encouraged to enlist, and when they returned to the Department as postmen, half their military service was to count as Post Office service for the purposes of pay."

I regret that that suggestion was never carried out.

I should like to state to your Lordships the position of the men to whose case I am calling attention. The maximum age for ex-soldiers and sailors to enter the Civil Service is forty-five. Therefore, should a man retire at sixty years of age, he would be allowed to count fifteen years, and at sixty-five years of age, when he must retire, twenty years service for Civil Service superannuation. Under these circumstances it is utterly impossible for an ex-soldier or sailor entering the Civil Service at forty-five, to retire with more than one-half of the maximum Civil Service pension.

I will give an example. Three men join the public services at the age of twenty years. A. joins the Civil Service, and B. and C. the Army or Navy. B. and C. on leaving the Army or Navy also receive appointments in the Civil Service. The maximum salary in each case is £150 per annum. A. on attaining the age of sixty would have thus completed forty years' service, which would entitle him to the maximum pension, viz., forty-sixtieths of his salary, which would be £100 per annum. B. enters the Civil Service at the age of thirty-seven with seventeen years service without pension. Should the whole of his military service be allowed to reckon as Civil service he would be enabled to retire at sixty years of age with twenty-three years Civil service, plus seventeen years military or naval service, making the maximum pension of forty-sixtieths years service, which would also amount to £100 per annum. C. (a sergeant or petty officer) enters the Civil Service with twenty-one years service in the Army or Navy at the age of forty-one, with a pension of 2s. per diem—or £36 10s. per annum. Therefore, when he reached sixty years of age he would be allowed to count nineteen years for Civil Service superannuation, which would amount to £47 10s. So that the pensioner with only four years less Civil Service than B. would receive less than half the Civil Service pension awarded to the non-pensioner; adding his military or naval pension on to this (viz., £36 10.) it would amount to £84 per annum, or £16 per annum less than the non-pensioner. Should C have been pensioned as a private instead of as a non-commissioned or petty officer, with say, 1s. per diem pension, his military or naval pension would be one-half of the amount shown—viz., £18 5s., which, added to his Civil Service pension of £47 10s., would amount to £65 15s. per annum, or £34 5s. less than the civilian or non-pensioner.

I base my argument on two grounds—first, on the ground of injustice of treatment, and, secondly, on the ground of policy. It seems to me grossly unfair that one man should receive a full pension, whereas another man doing the same work should be given a reduced pension. Both men are serving the same master—the State. No opportunity should be lost of impressing upon men wishing to enlist that their public spirit would not prejudice them afterwards when they came to leave the Colours. This principle has been conceded in the case of the police. A Civil servant on entering the police is entitled to reckon his service in both capacities. Yet this privilege is denied to soldiers. I cannot see how this can be justified, especially as the man in the Army is probably serving under much worse conditions than the other. Again, if we take two men serving in civil employment I think we should find that they would be treated on similar lines for superannuation, although one of them had been transferred to another department. This view was taken by Sir Edward Ward's Committee, and a very strong recommendation was embodied in their Report.

The number of men affected in the country must necessarily be very large. From one-third to one-half of the discipline staff of the prisons in England consist of ex-soldiers, their number probably amounting to something like 2,000, and I am informed that the training they have received in the Army peculiarly fits them for this work. In the convict prison at Peterhead there are twenty-three ex-soldiers serving, nineteen of them without pension. There are two typical cases I should like to mention. A man who served in my old regiment, the Royal Horse Guards, writes to me from Peterhead Convict Prison—

"I served for twelve years in His Majesty's Royal Horse Guards, under your Lordship. Not being able to count this twelve years for pension I cannot obtain any more than thirty-sixtieths of my pay, although I serve until I reach the age limit, sixty-five years of age; yet, I will have served the State for forty-two years. Had this been entirely Civil Service I would have been able to retire on maximum pension after forty years service. Thus, because I give twelve years service to the State as a soldier, I receive, at the end of forty-two years, 6s. 2d. per week less pension than I would have received for forty years Civil Service. This is neither just nor reasonable treatment of men who have worthily served their country."

There is another case of a man serving in the same prison who is the son of a shepherd on my property. His service in the Army, it is true, was only four years, but nearly the whole of that time was spent on active service. He served all through the South African War in the King's Own Borderers, and it does seem to me unfair that the services of this man, who has borne the hardships and dangers incidental to active service, should rank lower than those of the civilian who all that time was at home in peace and comfort.

The advantage to the State of men leaving the Army in a contented spirit, feeling that they have been well treated, is of the utmost importance. Such men are the very best recruiting agents you can have in the country. On the other hand, if you get men going up and down the country airing their grievances and warning others as to the way in which they have been treated, many most desirable men will be prevented from joining the Colours. Good men are afraid of prejudicing their chances by becoming soldiers when they see the prospect of earning an old-age pension for themselves made, if not impossible, at any rate much more difficult by the regulations. It is too big a handicap for men proposing to become soldiers to start seven years behind their civilian brethren, and this goes a long way to make the Army unpopular with the best class of men. The fact that so many old soldiers find their way into the workhouse is a strong argument that we should do all we can to induce a superior class to enlist. This I think we shall never do unless we can show that their service will not act to their detriment when they return to civil life. In a voluntary Army it is always difficult to get recruits, and I think it is well worth the nation's while to treat the men liberally. On these grounds I ask the Question which stands in my name, and I would urge that effect may be given to the recommendations of Sir Edward Ward's Committee.

*Lord DENMAN: My Lords, my impression when I saw this Question on the Notice Paper was that it mainly affected the War Office. I have, however, been informed that it is principally the concern of the Treasury, and therefore it is that, on behalf of that Department, I rise to reply to the speech of the noble and gallant Earl. I agree with him that the general question of the employment of time-expired soldiers and sailors is a very important one in its bearing on the subject of recruiting for the Army. For myself, on the few occasions before the present Government came into office that I ventured to address the House, I always urged the great importance of the problem of recruiting, and that this was one of the most difficult questions which those responsible for our Army administration were called upon to face. I see no reason to change that opinion to-day; but I am obliged to differ from the particular suggestion which the noble Earl makes.

In the first place, I think it would not be difficult to show, purely on grounds of economy, that it is not a very desirable proposition, for when it is considered that the pension list on the Votes amounts to the enormous sum of over £8,000,000 per annum it must be seen that the Treasury would naturally object to any addition being made to that already gigantic figure. But there are, as I hope I shall be able to show the House, other and stronger objections to it. Let us consider what are the terms on which a soldier undertakes to serve the State. He engages for a period of twelve years. It is not till after he has completed twelve years that he begins to reckon his service towards earning a pension. After he has served for fourteen years, if invalided, he obtains a pension, and after eighteen years if discharged; but, in the ordinary course of events, it is not until he has served for twenty-one years that he earns a military pension. If he goes into the Civil Service drawing a military pension, he gets his pay as a Civil servant and commences to qualify towards a Civil Service pension. Therefore, I do not think it can be contended that the State does not keep its bargain in this respect with the soldier.

The soldier joins knowing that after so many years he will become entitled to a pension. He prefers to enter the Civil Service knowing what the conditions and terms of service will be, and I presume that it is for reasons of his own that he adopts that course. Surely one of the objects of giving a military pension is that you desire to retain your best men with the Colours, and if you offer them superior inducements to leave the Army in order to enter the Civil Service you may then run the risk of taking away some of your best men from the Army, which I contend is undesirable from every point of view. I notice that in the Report quoted by the noble and gallant Earl, Sir Edward Ward and his colleagues lay stress upon compensating the soldier for the risks he has to undergo in the exercise of his profession. That may be so; but I have yet to learn that the average Englishman of from eighteen to twenty-five years, which is, I believe, the age at which recruits join the Army, will be deterred from joining by the risks he will naturally have to run.

THE EARL OF ERROLL: I did not say that.

*LORD DENMAN: The noble and gallant Earl did not say so, but I notice that Sir Edward Ward and his colleagues lay stress upon that point in their Report. I will not, however, pursue that further. The noble Earl placed before the House one or two cases where injustice does arise. I would like to put a case also. I will take the case of two men who desire to enter the Civil Service at the same time. One of them passes his examination and qualifies; the other fails, and subsequently enters the Army. I maintain, and should always be prepared to argue, that of the two the soldier for the first few years, at any rate, leads a very much pleasanter life. Thanks to improvements in regard to pay and rations, and the reduction of hours of sentry-go and of unnecessary fatigues—and I may say that these reductions are due to the energies of several successive Secretaries of State for War—the soldier has a very good time of it on the whole. The average Civil servant for the first few years is bound to spend many hours in what would be regarded by many people as drudgery. Now, let us suppose that the man who failed to get into the Civil Service and had entered the Army left after seven years and obtained an appointment in the Civil Service. Although probably a much improved man owing to his period of Army service, nevertheless he could not be as expert as the Civil servant with seven years experience behind him for the particular duties which a Civil servant is called upon to perform.

THE EARL OF ERROLL: That would not affect prison officials.

*LORD DENMAN: I am afraid I cannot speak with any authority as regards prison officials, because I am not acquainted with their terms of service or the duties they have to perform. I was taking rather the ordinary case. If the noble Earl's proposal were adopted the soldier would, as regards pension, be able to qualify on exactly the same footing as the Civil servant. Of course, it may be said that that would remove the grievance from the soldier's point of view, but I contend that it would create a very real grievance from the point of view of the Civil servant, and I am sure that is not a thing which my noble friend would propose to do. There is another objection, and it is this. As many ex-soldiers and ex-sailors as possible are given employment by the State. They are necessarily not a very large number in comparison with the number of men who annually leave the service and go into the Reserve, because that is not possible. Therefore, the time-expired soldier and sailor who obtain this Civil Service employment must be regarded as fortunate. If you increase the value of these already desirable appointments you naturally accentuate the hard lot of those retired soldiers who are unable to obtain suitable employment, or, as I fear is frequently the case, employment of any kind whatever. The noble Earl speaks of the desirability of men leaving the service in a contented spirit. I think the suggestion he has just made would act in an exactly contrary way.

The noble Earl also touched on the case of certain men who serve in the Navy and who are allowed to reckon some of their sea service towards their pension, and he argued, I understood, that this exception should be made the general rule. This may appear to be an anomaly, but it is not so in fact. The shipwright apprentices who serve in the Navy are not in anything but name engaged in one of the combatant forces; their work is of a civil character both in the Navy and in the dockyards. Yard craft men are seamen during their civil as well as their naval service. That explains the apparent anomaly which is mentioned in the Report of the Ward Committee, and has been alluded to this afternoon by my noble friend. I have only to add that the late Government were approached on several occasions with a view to adopting this particular proposal, and on each occasion they negatived it. For the reasons, therefore, that I have given, I do not think you can possibly expect Mr. Asquith to look upon it in any favourable light. I think, however, it is only fair to my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War, that I should state that he is very keenly alive to the desirability of doing everything in his power to obtain employment for time-expired soldiers. With this end in view, I understand that the War Office are now establishing courses of technical training in order the better to fit these men for civil life when they leave the Colours and go to the Reserve. I also understand that the Secretary of State is endeavouring to enlist the help of the County Association in obtaining work for men who leave the Colours and go to the Reserve; and I can assure the House that any practicable suggestions which may be put forward from any quarter will at all times receive his earnest attention and consideration.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: My Lords, I know that an important debate on another subject awaits your Lordships, and therefore, I do not desire to detain the House for more than two or three minutes on this question. The speech of the noble Lord was at the end sympathetic towards the Army, as, of course, any speech of his would be, though it was not sympathetic to the object which my noble friend behind me had in view. The noble Lord reminded us that the late Government were approached on this subject several times and my recollection corresponds with his statement; but I do not think that that is any reason for not continuing the consideration of the subject. I confess that in my opinion a considerable grievance does exist, and there is great cause for its existence. I was glad that the noble Lord did not lay particular stress on the objection of economy. Of course, that is an important consideration, but it is not one which the noble Lord or any Member of His Majesty's Government would desire to push too far; and no one would suggest that if they have a grievance we should deny justice to these men simply on the ground of economy. The noble Lord's first point was that soldiers, after all, did this with their eyes open, and had no grievance because they understood the conditions. That is true, but I do not think that is the grievance. The grievance, as I understand it, is that these twelve years, to continue the case quoted by the noble Lord, are spent in the service of the State, but are not allowed to qualify for a pension. There are, after all, a great many cases in which it could be easily proved that it is the same type of man who joins the Army and who joins the Civil Service. The noble Lord contended that the soldier had the easier time——

*LORD DENMAN: During the first few years of his service.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: That is true in peace time. But in war time I think it can be argued that the soldier is doing much greater service for the State. Therefore, I think if anybody is to have preferential treatment the soldier is entitled to it, but all that is asked for is that all persons who serve the Crown should receive equal treatment. There is no doubt this is a grievance which is felt by a large number of people, and I hope that pressure will continue to be placed on the Treasury while the grievance remains unremoved.

BUILDING GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS.

*LORD BARNARD rose to call attention to the policy of the Board of Education with regard to the allocation of the £100,000 voted by Parliament last session for building new schools, and with regard to other matters connected with recent educational administration; and to move for Papers. The noble Lord said: My Lords, I trust your Lordships will not think I am trespassing unduly upon your time by asking you to consider this afternoon some very important questions affecting the Board of Education. As your Lordships will have observed from the Notice Paper, I desire particularly to draw the attention of the House to a sum of £100,000 which was appropriated last year for the purpose of grants for building schools.

The circumstances of the allocation of that money were discussed on several occasions, both in the other House of Parliament and in your Lordships' House. I do not know how other Members of this House may look at the question, but I confess that, in spite of the elaborate arguments which were made use of by those who defended the arrangement, I for one am at the present moment no more convinced of the propriety of such a proceeding than I was when the subject was first brought forward. Whether that be so or not, it is not necessary now to go into the Constitutional question; but I think it is very desirable that this House and the country at large should take stock of the position, if I may so put it, having regard to the possible adoption of a similar proceeding in the course of the financial year which will very shortly begin. I am led to entertain that idea by the words in the Regulations issued by the Board of Education. Regulation No. 8 concludes as follows—

> "No grant will be paid under these Regulations after 31st March, 1908, unless a similar grant is sanctioned by Parliament in respect of the financial year ending 31st March, 1909."

That appears to contemplate a renewal of this grant. I also saw reported in the Press a statement made by the Chairman of the Finance Committee of one of the Welsh County Councils—I think it was Glamorganshire—that they had better not apply for grants for too many schools in this year, but limit their demands to a certain number with a view to renewing the applications in respect of other schools in following years. I think, therefore, we may take it for granted that there is, at any rate, very considerable probability of some proposal of this kind being again brought before Parliament in the coming financial year. I ask, therefore, that His Majesty's Government should produce papers showing in full detail the principles upon which the present grant has been expended and the schools to which it has been allocated. I ask this because the proceedings in Parliament last year partook of a somewhat mysterious nature. We never could ascertain definitely what the object of this grant was; all that could be ascertained was that the grant was intended to meet certain cases of tyranny—some such word as that was used by the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Education—in certain single school areas by enabling a council school to be set up where a certain number of parents either had, or pretended they had, a religious grievance

I should like, if I may digress for a moment, to refer to the religious grievance. I admit, and I think all your Lordships will admit, that the question of single school areas does present difficulties, but many advocates of Church schools as well as opponents have expressed their willingness to consider, and, if possible, devise, some means by which those difficulties may be removed. The difficulty is, I understand, that parents object to their children receiving religious instruction of a certain character. I need hardly remark that in almost all cases that I have heard of it is the Nonconformist who objects to his child receiving Church instruction. I argue, as has been argued again and again, that the law has provided a remedy for that in the Conscience Clause. I know the answer that is always given to that argument. It it is this—Can you expect a poor child to have the stigma attached to it of not doing the same as the other children in the school? There might be something in that in some cases, but in the cases for which I gather this grant was intended the circumstances are entirely different. If, as we are led to believe, Nonconformity is in the majority in most districts in Wales, and if the majority of the children in the school take advantage of the Conscience Clause, the stigma, if any, will be on the child that remains for religious instruction. Therefore in cases where the parents of the majority of the children desire that their children should be withdrawn, no stigma can attach. If, however, they are in a small minority, I think I may fairly use the argument which has been put forward on recent occasions by His Majesty's Government to the effect that "minorities must suffer," not that I suggest that such an argument as that is defensible, but at the same time the difficulty that has to be met. If, however, the political Party now in power are determined that no one should suffer for conscience sake, I trust they will see fit to recognise that amongst their opponents there is equally strong conscientious belief, and will do their utmost, in any legislation they bring forward for the reorganisation, particularly of elementary education, to respect the consciences of those who are opposed to them equally with those of their supporters.

Pardon me if for one moment I ask your attention to the history of this matter. Prior to the Act of 1870, there was, as your Lordships know, no organised State-administered system of elementary education in this country. At the same time it had for many years been recognised that education was, in the interest of the State, most desirable, and consequently Governments were in the habit, prior to 1870, of giving grants to encourage and stimulate the erection of elementary schools in localities where they did not exist but where there was a tendency to provide them. After the Act of 1870 it was obvious that no more grants could be given to particular localities, because if that were done it would be assisting one locality at the expense of the taxpayers at large, whilst another locality would not have similar assistance, and would, therefore, be at a disadvantage. I think that history of the case, though it was brought out very fairly in the course of the discussion in the House of Commons, is not sufficiently recognised by those who consider this question.

Now I come to the present day. The theory that it is not desirable to give public money to one school area in preference to another has held good since 1870. It has only been broken through by the present Minister for Education, and broken through for the reasons I have already stated. The Education Acts provide very elaborate guarantees and safeguards to protect the ratepayers from any undue waste of their money by the erection of unnecessary schools; and, although the Regulations to which I have already referred provide that any building grants made under this Appropriation Act shall be governed by Sections 8 and 9 of the Education Act, 1902, the information at my disposal goes to show that the safeguards contained in that Act in regard to petitions from parents and ratepayers are not paid very much attention to, for there is considerable complaint in many parishes in Wales that petitions have received no consideration whatever. There has been complaint on the part of some of the managers of Church schools in Wales that officials of the local education authorities have been to London and have had private interviews with the Minister for Education. Personally I cannot see that there is any great harm in that, provided that the same facilities are afforded to those who hold opposite views and that the Minister holds the balance fair between both opposing factions.

I do not know whether your Lordships will agree with the conclusion at which I have arrived, but it seems to me that this grant of £100,000 is nothing more nor less than placing at the disposal of a Party political leader a sum of public money to be used by him at his absolute discretion for purely Party political purposes. If that view is right, or anything approaching right, it means that in the present day of enlightened thought on matters of public policy there is a grievous return to the corrupt and unpatriotic system of former times. The object is quite obviously to avoid by indirect means the innumerable restrictions contained in Acts of Parliament, which would have prevented the Minister for Education from granting these sums. He evidently recognised that there was no possibility of getting round the Acts, and he therefore resorted to this extremely ingenious expedient. I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration—though at the same time my condemnation—of the ingenuity of the scheme which has been devised. The way in which the grant is allocated is one of the things nobody has ever been able to find out. It would be of very great interest, and perhaps the noble Earl, in the course of his reply, may be able to give us the information, to know if any applications have been received from any other part of England and Wales except the Principality and Monmouthshire for grants out of this fund; and still more interesting would it be to know if any applications have been received from Church parents where they have only a board school education provided by the State for their children.

However that may be, there is one point to which I am going to refer with some diffidence, because I have not been able to satisfy myself as to the exact position. I refer to the question of the provisions of Section 18, Sub-section (1), Paragraph (*c*), of the Act of 1902. Mr. McKenna, in an answer he gave in another place, said that, in making any grants for the purpose of new schools out of this particular grant, that section would be complied with. I would ask your Lordships to allow me to quote that section. It provides that—

> "The local education authority shall charge such portion as they think fit, not being less than one-half or more than three-fourths, of any expenses for a new school on the locality."

The regulations show that the local education authority is the party to apply for the grant, not the parish desiring the school. I presume that a grant of, say, £5,000 for a school would go into the county fund. If that is so I cannot understand how, as has been argued, the locality is going to be relieved of any expenditure at all. Say a county has resolved that one-fourth of the expense of a new school should be charged to the county, and three-fourths to the parish; if the one-fourth come out of the county fund, which has had the subvention of £5,000, three-fourths still remain to be charged on the parish. We want more enlightenment as to whether these grants do go into the county fund, or whether they are earmarked for any particular schools. Without such information as that it is impossible to judge of the fairness or the justice with which the grants are allocated.

I have in my hand the names of a large number of cases of schools in Wales in which more or less of a grievance is felt in consequence of the proceedings which have been taken with regard to this grant. Whether this feeling is always justified it is impossible to say, probably in some cases it is not, but it is a hardship that these parishes should not know the circumstances more fully. One of the clearer cases is at a place in the county of Denbigh, where there is to be a school for 500 children; the Government grant is something over £2,000, and in addition £1,900 has to be provided from the rates. So although this grant is only to be made to meet cases of special tyranny, your Lordships will see that the ratepayers who are satisfied with the existing school are also to be asked to pay for the school which is to remove the special tyranny. As the existing schools are very much overcrowded, new schools would in any case be necessary. If so, the very thing is being done which the Act of 1870, and which Mr. McKenna in another place, said should not be done, namely, to supply the deficiency of school accommodation out of this special grant. In these cases the ratepayers have sent up petitions and are very much aggrieved because they hear nothing as to what happens to those petitions. They naturally imagine that they are ignored and that the question is decided without any consideration whatever of their representations in opposition. They are aware that Sections 8 and 9 of the Act of 1902 provide that, if necessary, local inquiries must be held; all they know is that no local inquiry is held, and that their representations, so far as they can see, receive no consideration. As a rule these ratepayers represent a large majority. In four or five or these cases in Denbighshire there have been very serious differences for some time past between the managers and the local education authority, and in one case a Mr. Davies, a solicitor, who took a very active part against the Church people——

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): Which parish is the noble Lord referring to?

*LORD BARNARD: To the parish of Bylchau. All the letters which this parish now receives from the Board of Education are signed by this very gentleman. Naturally some soreness has arisen, because it is felt that it is possible that Mr. Davies, who was formerly a party to these disputes, is now the judge in regard to them. I merely refer to that as one of those administrative points which I think are worthy of the consideration of the Board of Education. I will take another case. In the county of Flint, in July, the local education authority gave notice to provide additional school accommodation on the ground of overcrowding. The notices were published, when suddenly they were withdrawn, the whole procedure altered, and a grant made, as far as is known, out of this £100,000. That looks like another case of going round the provisions of the Act of 1870. In another Flintshire parish there were two schools, one an undenominational school. In May, 1906, the local education authority decided to build a new school to take the place of the undenominational one, but, in spite of that, a grant of £1,000 has been made. Moreover, the original estimate for that school was only £940; therefore they are going to give them, apparently, more money than is actually required.

I will not weary your Lordships by going through any more of these cases. Let me refer to another point to which I wish to call attention—the frequency with which of late the Department has suddenly and unexpectedly and for no reason that can be seen, altered its decision. My noble friend Lord Dartmouth brought one case of this description—the case of Royston School in the West Riding of Yorkshire—to the attention of your Lordships last summer, where up to a certain point it was quite obvious that the Board of Education were opposed to the views taken by the local education authority, but suddenly and unexpectedly an entire change took place, it being imagined that the local education authority brought influence to bear on the Minister for Education. There was another exactly similar case in a district in Halifax; but the most notorious case of all is the case of Swansea, a case which has occupied the attention for a long time past of all those interested in elementary education. I do not propose to ask your Lordships to consider the facts of that case at present, but it is another instance of the Board of Education suddenly and unexpectedly altering its decision.

A more recent case is that of another West Riding school, at Garforth, which has also become a notorious case. The Board of Education wrote in April, 1907, stating that they saw no adequate reason for doing what the local education authority suggested in face of the opposition of the managers. Further correspondence took place, and in June the Board wrote again that they were not prepared to alter their decision; but four weeks after that came a further letter in which the Board stated that they had reconsidered the case and reversed their decision. The learned Judge who tried that case could not help remarking upon this very extraordinary change, and he drew attention to the fact that the first two decisions were obviously those of the permanent officials and the last that of the President of the Board overruling them. I speak on a matter of this kind with some personal feeling. For ten years I was myself engaged in a Government Department and during part of that time I was private secretary to the chief. Consequently I was brought into contact with the officials of a great number of other Departments, and I am prepared to say that the Civil servants of the Crown can be excelled by no body of men in this country for their devotion to duty and for the impartiality with which they carry out their work. I have never heard of a case in which a permanent Civil servant of the Crown was accused of having improperly taken sides for political or other reasons; and if their reputation and character are to be maintained, the present practice which appears to have crept in at the Board of Education ought to be checked at all hazards. Its continuance will be most disastrous from the public point of view. Before I leave the Garforth case there is one other matter to which I should like to allude. The learned Judge who tried that case said that neither the Board of Education nor the local education authority are entitled to say that because they do not like the law as it stands they will give directions which will frustrate the objects of the law. That is a principle to which, I hope, we shall all adhere. The Judge doubted if a Court of Law could interfere, but he added that if the Board of Education were prepared to disregard the law the responsibility would rest upon them.

Then there is the administration of the Charitable Trusts Acts. What are known as charitable endowments have always been peculiarly favoured by law. The Court of Chancery has always taken them under its jurisdiction and assisted them in every conceivable way. But owing to the fact that an enormous number of these charities are of very small annual value, it became obvious many years ago that proceedings in Chancery were costly and likely to eat up the income of a charity for many years to come. Lord Brougham, about a century ago, was so convinced of the necessity of reorganising charitable trusts and preserving them for the benefit of the public that he secured the appointment of a Commission, the final outcome of whose labours was the Charitable Trusts Act of 1853. That Act conferred upon the body of Commissioners appointed under it very considerable powers of administration, but not the power of removing trustees and certainly not of making schemes. But they were authorised to inquire into charities and to give certificates enabling trustees to go to the Court in various cases. That body was to consist under the Act of four Commissioners, two of them to be barristers of twelve years' standing, the object, of course, being to ensure that the Commissioners should be conversant with the law. The third need not have been a barrister. They held office during good behaviour. The fourth was a sort of Parliamentary Commissioner, and he was the only representative the Commissioners had in Parliament, and he held office during His Majesty's pleasure. He did not attend at the office regularly, the other three to all intents and purposes constituting the Board. Two of the first three Commissioners were eminent Chancery practising barristers. Those provisions remained in force until the time when the powers under the Charitable Trusts Acts were conferred upon the Board of Education.

The President of the Board of Education is now called upon to exercise powers which, until recently, were exercised by a body consisting principally of expert lawyers, and which, up to half a century ago, had only been exercised by a Court of Equity. I should have thought that the right hon. Gentleman would have made himself familiar with those facts and would have considered himself bound to continue to act in accordance with the doctrines of Courts of Equity, but there are cases which show that he is not bound by anything of the kind. I have in my hand an extraordinary case in connection with which, as far as I can judge from the official correspondence, the only motive that he appears to have had in his mind was one of political expediency. There is a small charity at Narberth in the county of Pembroke. It was founded as recently as 1832 by a Mr. Devonald, and the trustees, finding it necessary to alter the trust, applied to the Board. A new scheme was prepared, and, in sending it down, the Board expressed the opinion that they had no option but to maintain it as a denominational charity. So that two years ago the Board of Education, as advised, were quite sure as to its being a Church charity. I imagine that representations were privately made to the Board of Education, with the result that, in November last, an astounding letter was received by the trustees intimating that the Board had had this matter "under careful consideration in connection with objections they had received under the Charitable Trusts Act and with certain matters of general principle by which the case is affected," and that "they are not now prepared to establish the scheme." The letter did not vouchsafe to say what these matters of general principle were, and it would be very interesting to know what the circumstances were that led to the change of view on the part of the Board of Education.

I desire to say just one word on the subject of training colleges. The President of the Board has informed those connected with training colleges, in reply to their statements that they were absolutely debarred by their trusts from carrying out his scheme, that he has power under the Charitable Trusts Act to alter their trusts, and that they have only to come to him and he will alter their trusts in any way. I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that the right hon. Gentleman has no powers of that kind whatever. The right hon. Gentleman has only those powers, conferred upon him in succession to the Charity Commissioners, which were formerly exercised by the Court of Chancery, and those powers are governed by the doctrine of *cy-pres*. I trust that the Government will either give a full and clear statement with regard to the £100,000, or agree to my Motion to lay Papers on the Table of the House.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House, Papers with regard to the allocation of the £100,000, voted by Parliament last session for building new schools, and with regard to other matters connected with recent educational administration."—(*The Lord Barnard*).

THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S: My Lords, I must first of all thank the noble Lord for drawing attention to the case of the charity in the County of Pembroke. I understand that the Board of Education were acting in that case in a judicial capacity, and it seems to me very astonishing how Mr. Birrell could give one judicial decision on a matter of principle one year, and Mr. McKenna could give a totally opposite decision the following year. I hope the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council, when he replies, will bear in mind that the particular point in that case is that the Board of Education under Mr. Birrell and the Board under Mr. McKenna took a different view as to the denominational character of this charity.

I pass on to the case of the Oxford-street Church School, Swansea. I have ventured to give the noble Earl who so ably represents the Board of Education in your Lordships' House, private notice of my intention to call attention to the inaccuracy of certain statements concerning this school which were made by the Minister for Education in another place last month. The four foundation managers of this Swansea school, who did their utmost to endeavour to obtain a friendly understanding with the local education authority, are gentlemen of high character and good social position; two of them have brothers who are Members of your Lordships' House, and two of them are leading solicitors in Swansea. The school is especially fortunate in having as its correspondent a gentleman of ability, who has shown by great sacrifices the sincerity of his devotion to high ideals of education.

The managers were very much surprised at the statements made concerning their school by Mr. McKenna in the House of Commons last month, and when they wrote to the right hon. Gentleman pointing out his errors as to the facts he failed to withdraw them. The managers accordingly felt that, in the very unusual circumstances of the case, they had no alternative but to print the correspondence and circulate it to the Members of both Houses of Parliament. I shall endeavour to prove two points—first, that the President of the Board of Education failed to inform himself accurately about the affairs of his own Department before speaking in another place; and, secondly, that when those who had reason to complain of his errors wrote to him to point them out he failed to withdraw them.

Happily there is general agreement about the importance of impartial administration. The noble Lord opposite quoted the learned Judge who tried the

Garforth case, and made certain remarks which are very rarely heard in this country from the Bench concerning a Government Department. I am going to quote another authority. On the morning after the Minister for Education made his statement in another place, the London *Daily News*, the official organ of Liberal opinion, said—

> "Whatever the views of a Liberal Minister may be regarding the wisdom of according facilities for denominational teaching at the expense of the State, his duty is to administer the law as it stands, to hold the balance even and to repress intolerance if it makes its appearance in local authorities. It would be an evil day for Liberalism in this country if it were to descend to petty administratvie persecution against religious teaching."

The *Daily News* proceeded to say that any suggestion of this kind had been explained away by the satisfactory speech of Mr. McKenna. Let us see how far that speech was satisfactory. I concur in the just tribute which Lord Barnard paid to the distinguished impartiality of the permanent Civil servants of the Crown. We in Wales, in the matter of education, stand in a somewhat peculiar position. As one interested in Welsh education I am indebted to the President of the Board for having set up the Welsh Department, inasmuch as it has given Wales the advantage of the brilliant abilities and noble educational ideals possessed by the Chief Inspector, Mr. Owen Edwards. But the appointment of Mr. Davies, the gentleman referred to by Lord Barnard, as Secretary of the Welsh Department was received on all hands in Wales with amazement. Whatever merits Mr. Davies may possess, he has had only a few months' experience of the noble traditions and the trained discipline of the Civil Service.

The Swansea case is not really complicated. It resolves itself into two questions—the remodelling of the school buildings and the teachers' salaries. The substance of the former issue is what accommodation the school when remodelled is to have. The noble Lord described the policy of the Board of Education as extremely ingenious. The local education authority of Swansea may lay some claim to this distinction; but, like many extremely ingenious persons, it has been too clever by half. Their policy has been to make the managers burn their candles at both ends. They have insisted on a higher standard in relation to buildings and a lower standard in relation to salaries. When Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Lyttelton charged Mr. McKenna in another place with having departed in this case from the established conditions of fair administration, Mr. McKenna's line of defence was broadly this, that he had adhered exactly to the administrative principles of his predecessors.

But what are the facts? The appointed day in Swansea was the last day of September, 1904. Six months after that date the managers submitted to the Board of Education plans drawn up by a well-known London architect for the remodelling of the school buildings at a cost of £6,000. After modification in response to the requirements of the Board of Education, the plans were provisionally approved, but the managers were instructed to re-submit them to the Board for final approval in the usual way through the local education authority. My first point is that the Board presided over by the noble Marquess opposite passed the plans in regard to the accommodation. The following January the matter came before Mr. Birrell, and his Board wrote to the local education authority enclosing a report from the Board's architect passing the plans in regard to accommodation as they stood. The managers heard no more for a vear; and at last, after the plans had been travelling to and fro between the Swansea authority and the Board of Education for two years, the managers began to grow weary of this extraordinary delay, and in the spring of last year they appealed to Mr. McKenna for final approval of the plans, which, by the way, had been already twice practically and once definitely approved by the Board.

Mr. McKenna took two days to make up his mind, and replied in a short note to the effect that the accommodation of the school would have to be so cut down that it would be reduced to a second-rate school. The managers protested; but the Board of Education said they must adhere to their decision—though that decision had never before been given—to require a space of twenty square feet per child playground. That was the first word the managers had heard about the playground. These plans had been definitely passed by the Board of the noble Marquess and Sir William Anson, and also by the Board of Mr. Birrell; yet not one syllable had been uttered about the playground accommodation until Mr. McKenna, in May last year, sprung this drastic demand suddenly upon the managers. It so happened that generous friends of the school beyond any expectation which the managers could reasonably have entertained, were so stirred by Mr. McKenna's action that they found £2,800 to enlarge the playground. I deny that Mr. McKenna's action on this question was in exact continuance of the action of Sir William Anson and Mr. Birrell. I am not arguing that Mr. McKenna may not have been right. Mr. McKenna may have acted rightly, but whether his action was right or wrong the right hon. Gentleman is not entitled to say that his action accorded with that of his predecessor in office.

I pass to the subject of salaries, which is also a very important question to the Swansea schools. The Minister for Education was even more emphatic as to his loyalty to the administrative principles of his predecessor in regard to the question of the payment of equal salaries in council and voluntary schools. His words were—

> "Here again I have only done exactly what my predecessor did. There has been no change in the practice of the Board of Education."

That is a very broad affirmation to make. The facts are these. It so happens that the appeal on the question of salaries was only sent up to the Board of Education a fortnight before the Unionist Government left office. The reason for that was that the managers, to my great satisfaction, thought they ought to give all reasonable time to the local education authority to look at the matter all round; and when they began to despair of fair handling they took the line of informing the Board of Education what was going on, without appealing to them, I think.

The Lord Bishop of St. David's.

Staffing was the chief question in that year, but salaries came before the Board by way of a formal appeal as far back as 24th November, 1905, and the matter has been there till now. Though Sir William Anson did not deal with this question in Swansea, the general administrative principle upon which the Board at that time acted is laid down very clearly in an answer given in another place in July, 1903, in respect of the question whether the action of the local education authority in refusing rate aid to the voluntary schools was legal or not. It was then declared by the Board that—

> "It is the duty of every county council to maintain and keep efficient all public elementary schools within its area; the rate and the Government grant together constitute the fund at the disposal of the local authority for the purpose. The standard of efficiency in both classes of schools must be alike, unless special educational reasons can be shown for the distinction."

May I paraphrase that answer? It says, I think, two things—that the question of salaries is a question of efficiency, and that there must not be two standards of efficiency but one. Observe the words: "Unless special educational reasons can be shown." It may be asked: May not this case come under that head? A good authority on that subject is the town council of Swansea, who act as the local education authority. The town Council of Swansea were asked by the Board of Education on the 18th of last month what they had to say to the charge brought against them by the managers that they were failing to keep the school efficient, and last week a very interesting discussion took place on the subject. A resolution was proposed, as to which I shall not trouble your Lordships, but an amendment in the following terms was declared carried by the mayor—

> "That the Board of Education be informed that the explanation of the Swansea local education authority differentiating between the teachers of the provided and the non-provided schools is that the majority of the members being out of sympathy with the voluntary schools desire to make the maintenance of the latter as difficult as possible."

Therefore it cannot be attempted to be argued that there were any special educational reasons at Swansea for differentiation, neither is Mr. McKenna entitled to say that he has acted exactly as the noble Marquess opposite or Sir William Anson acted.

The question of salaries also came before Mr. Birrell, who was Mr. McKenna's immediate predecessor in office, and was, moreover, a Liberal Minister. The teachers in Swansea declined absolutely to sign any agreement in respect of any salaries below the scale in force in the Swansea Council Schools. When the Board of Education pressed the managers in July, 1906, to draw up an agreement with their teachers, the managers did so, and the agreements were signed by the teachers. In those agreements an exact sum corresponding to the scale in force in the Swansea Council Schools for that grade of teacher was entered, and the managers sent the agreements thus signed to the Board of Education and asked what they were to do. The local education authority had declined from the beginning to fix the teachers' salaries on the council scale. Mr. Birrell replied enclosing a letter he had addresed to the local education authority. The letter was couched in that picturesque style of which Mr. Birrell is so great a master, and it was also most straightforward. Mr. Birrell said—

> "The Board of Education are not aware of any circumstances which would justify a differentiation in the salaries paid to teachers in council and voluntary schools. They feel that the present uncertainty is unjust to the teachers and gravely imperils the efficiency of the school. They trust, therefore, to hear at an early date that the local authority will give their assent to the agreements prepared."

That is perfectly clear English; it is a perfectly clear decision of the Board of Education that there must not be two standards of efficiency.

I now come to the present Minister for Education. I think three times, certainly twice, the managers sent the names of the teachers and the amounts of the salaries to the Board of Education. Yet it was said in another place that no applications from the teachers had been received. I cannot make out how that statement came to be made. Not only was a Memorandum and all particulars forwarded to the Board, but a letter was sent by each of the teachers in this school. I do not know what further formality the Board of Education expect. In April of last year the Swansea authority raised the scale of salaries of the teachers in the council schools. Therefore, nobody can say that the scale previously paid was excessive. But, when the managers wrote asking what salaries they proposed putting into the teachers' agreements, the local education authority replied that they were prepared to consent to pay the salaries the teachers had been receiving before. These salaries the teachers absolutely declined to accept. The National Union of Teachers is a very patient body, but this was too much even for them. They called the teachers out and black-listed the school, and the managers were face to face with the alternative of the ruin of the school or of meeting the reasonable and just demands of the teachers.

The managers decided themselves to enter into agreements with the teachers and to undertake to pay them the scale of salaries in force in the council schools in the area. Your Lordships know that the view of the Board of Education is that if the managers of a non-provided school pay the teachers' salaries necessary to maintain the school efficient, or part of the salaries, then the question comes within the purview of the Default Act. I was amazed to read the statement subsequently made by the Minister for Education, in which he said: "They do not do it." When pressed on this question in the House of Commons it was very difficult to get an answer from the right hon. Gentleman. At last he gave an answer which was by no means satisfactory. He said that: "In some cases they were paid." I thought it my duty to write to *The Times* and correct that statement. As a matter of fact, in all cases the teachers in this Church school are paid to the penny. The whole facts reflect severely upon the administration of the Minister for Education and upon the intelligence side of the Welsh Department. If an atmosphere of goodwill is to be created, the Government will have to see to it that the Minister for Education does his duty, which is to administer the law as it stands.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: My Lords, as reference has been made by Lord Barnard in his very interesting speech to the case of the Royston school, and as I had the privilege of introducing that question in your Lordships' House last year, I should like to say a word or two on the present occasion. In the first place, I would remind your Lordships of the position with regard to the Royston school as raised in the debate last year. In August, 1906, the headmastership of this school became vacant. There were some sixty-seven candidates; three were selected, and finally Mr. Milnes was elected. The local education authority, the West Riding County Council, refused to confirm the appointment of Mr. Milnes, and in that refusal the Board of Education concurred. The debate that took place in your Lordships' House last year brought one or two matters to light, which, I think, are worth referring to on the present occasion.

In that debate we elicited that, in the opinion of the Board of Education, where a difference occurred between the local education authority and the managers, the sole duty of the Board of Education was to settle whether the refusal had been based on educational grounds or not, and that, having so satisfied themselves, it was not necessary for them to inquire as to whether the reasons alleged were adequate. It would be very easy to prove that in this particular case the local education authority claimed full discretion in the appointment of the teachers. The chairman of the Education Committee of the West Riding, in a letter to the *Yorkshire Post*, definitely stated that he had heard no single word from any member of the education committee to the effect that Mr. Milnes was unfit for the post, and that his competence had not been questioned. Therefore the refusal on the part of the local education authority to confirm the appointment of this candidate was, by their own showing, not an educational one.

In another place the Minister for Education rather complicated matters by his answer. He said that, in the interests of the teacher, it was undesirable to state publicly the precise educational reasons on which the local education authority founded their decision that Mr. Milnes was unsuited for the post. What has subsequently taken place has proved conclusively that the publicity to be avoided was not in the interests of the teacher, but in the interests of the Board of Education. Now what was the test of educational fitness? I maintain that the examiners on this occasion were not expert examiners. The examination, which took place actually in the presence of the children, lasted a quarter of an hour. The visit was a surprise one. I believe my noble friend opposite holds the view that the examiners were competent, and that the examination took at least three-quarters of an hour. I do not care myself whether it took ten minutes or ten hours. I maintain that an examination of that kind and held under those conditions is not sufficient to blast the career of a struggling teacher.

Whether or not it is the duty of the Board to inquire into the adequacy of the reasons given, I would point out that it is admitted that the Board did make an inquiry as to the fitness of the candidate and received an excellent report. I should like to be informed why, if it is not their duty to inquire into the adequacy of the reasons given, it was necessary to send down an inspector to make inquiry. I am sure it will give satisfaction to your Lordships to know that, in consequence of the debate that was raised last year in this House, Mr. Milnes has been appointed to a larger school, in which he has to deal with a larger staff and more children. The appointment, moreover, carries with it a higher salary than he would have received at the Royston school. The Board of Education satisfied themselves that Mr. Milnes was fully competent on educational grounds, but apparently yielded to the pressure of the local education authority. By so doing they gave the local education authority complete control over the election.

We have been told that the refusal of the authority appeared to be based on educational grounds. If it can only be said that the refusal "appeared" to be based on educational grounds, I do not think it carries them very far. Last year I asked for Papers, but the really important Paper—the Report of the Inspector of the Board of Education—was not given. It has been stated that it is the practice to refrain from publishing such Reports, and that, if whenever any person considers himself aggrieved, a debate could be raised in Parliament, with full publication of Papers following, Reports would be framed with a view to that contingency. I should have thought Parliament the proper place to raise the question when a person considers himself aggrieved. If the Report in question had been published in full, I believe it would have shown that in the first case the objection to Mr. Milnes's appointment was entirely political, Mr. Milnes being a Conservative and a good Churchman.

EARL CAWDOR: My Lords, I will undertake not to stand for more than a few moments between your Lordships and the noble Earl who is to reply on the important issues that have been raised this afternoon. But I wish to say one or two words, and to confine what I have to say solely to the case of Swansea. The case of Swansea consists really of three parts in so far as I wish to touch upon it—first, the question of buildings and the demands made by the Board of Education in that matter; secondly, the question of salaries, and the action taken in differentiating between provided and non-provided schools; and, thirdly, the refusal on the part of the local education authority for many months to maintain a school which was recognised by the Board of Education as an efficient public elementary school.

Two of these questions have now, indeed, been settled and are beyond controversy, but what we are drawing attention to is the unfair administration in our view of the Board of Education with respect to these points. The school is a school providing accommodation for 1,300 children, and is, I believe, one of the most efficient in South Wales. It was acknowledged that 1,300 children might be too many, and the provision that had been practically approved before the advent of the present Government was for between 900 and 1,000 children. Then negotiations proceeded until the amount of the accommodation was brought down to a little over 900. A series of curious episodes followed, and the Board of Education, under its present chief, proposed to cut down the accommodation to 500. First of all, I suggest to the noble Earl that the Board of Education has no power to make such a reduction except upon educational grounds. I suggest to the noble Earl that that proceeding was, of itself, irregular.

Apart from that, let us see for a moment what it was that was required by the Board of Education with regard to this school. First of all, after a great deal of consideration they approved of certain playground accommodation being provided partly on the roof and partly on the flat, and the managers of the school at great expense provided a suitable amount of accommodation for a playground on the flat as well as on the roof. Then came a curious turn, and the Board of Education refused to sanction the playground except for the reduced number of 500 children. That is a pettifogging way of dealing with the matter and really unworthy of the head of a great Department. It was stated by Lord Robert Cecil that the whole of the tactics during these operations were unworthy even of the pettifogging operations of a County Court. At all events, I suggest to the noble Earl that it was a very unworthy way of dealing with this important question. After all, what has occurred? In the end the managers persuaded the Board of Education to submit to the local education authority the question whether it was not better, in the educational interests of the district, that the school should be maintained at some such figure as 850. The local education authority said that it was so, and the Board of Education, after all this correspondence and all this waste of time, finally approved of the plans, including the playground on the roof and the flat, for 850 children. Now, have we not a little right to complain that all this trouble should have been occasioned and that this correspondence should have gone on for months and months, when, after all, the thing aimed at by the managers was proved absolutely the right thing to do?

Then, with regard to the teachers' salaries, the matter really came before Mr. Birrell when he was head of the Education Department, towards the close of 1905, and in July, 1906, I think Mr. Birrell laid down perfectly clearly that, so far as the Board of Education were concerned, there was no reason why there should be any differentiation between the salaries of these teachers and those of teachers in other schools under the local education authority of Swansea, and he pressed on the local authority that the proper salaries should be paid at once. The managers of the school also took the opinion not long ago of Sir Robert Finlay, who, I am informed, advised them that any differentiation in salaries was illegal. First I shelter myself behind Mr. Birrell, and secondly, behind Sir Robert Finlay, in suggesting to the noble Earl that a differentiation such as that suggested by the local education authority, and so far not prevented by the Board of Education, is absolutely illegal.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Under what Act?

EARL CAWDOR: Under Section 7 of the Act of 1902. In spite of all that has happened, your Lordships will hardly believe that at the present moment the salaries of these teachers are not being paid at the proper rate, and they are still protesting. It is nothing less than a scandal that the Board of Education should have allowed this interminable friction and delay to go on ever since 1905. For no less a time than six months from the end of July last year until January of this year, the local education authority, in defiance of the Board of Education, refused to pay the salaries at all, even at the lower rate, and during August, September, and October the salaries were paid by the managers out of their own pocket. At the end of October, however, they told the Board of Education that they could not continue to do so unless the Board gave them an undertaking that they would be repaid. The Board of Education, for some reason I cannot explain, declined to give any security whatever, and during November and December the teachers were not paid at all. They went without their salaries for two whole months, and throughout that time the school was recognised by the Board of Education as an efficient public elementary school. Yet during all these months the Board allowed the education authority to laugh in their faces. Could there be anything more degrading to a great public Department than to be treated like that?

It cannot be said that the Board of Education had no power. They had power under the Default Act. We know perfectly well that the noble Earl himself and his colleagues dissented from the passing of that Act. But I put it to the noble Earl that anyone who takes up the headship of a great Department of the State is bound to administer the law as it stands. In this case the Department have declared the school efficient, and that the local authority ought to maintain it and pay the salaries of the teachers. They had put into their hands a very simple power—the Default Act—by which they could have secured the maintenance of the school; but it was only just before the meeting of Parliament that the local authority agreed to maintain the school. I do not believe for a moment that if the noble Earl opposite had had the handling of this matter it would have been handled as it has been, and I appeal to the noble Earl to use his influence to secure that such a scandalous state of things should come to an end, and to give your Lordships this evening an assurance that, in so far as he is concerned, he will do his best to see that the law is carried out, and that, if the local authority fails to carry it out, we may look to the Government to do so to the best of their ability.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I first have to thank Lord Barnard for having been kind enough to postpone this discussion. I also have to thank him and the right rev. prelate and my noble friend opposite for having given me some information as to the particular schools and special matters with which they desired to deal. At the same time, I am afraid I must still appeal to your

Lordships' indulgence, as I am not quite in such a good state as I should wish to be for making a speech. This discussion has covered an exceedingly wide field. It sometimes happens to my noble friend Lord Portsmouth that he is called upon to discuss practically the whole administration of His Majesty's land forces, both at home and abroad. The field which I am asked to deal with to-day is almost as wide, and I am at this disadvantage compared with my noble friend, that he, at any rate, is not attacked in flank from the right rev. Bench.

I will deal first with the subject-matter of Lord Barnard's Question as it appears on the Paper — namely, the building grant. The constitutional aspect of that grant of £100,000 was very fully discussed last year, and there are so many other matters to deal with that perhaps I may be excused if I do not touch upon this at all. It is a point on which I do not think we are likely to agree. As regards the administration of this grant Lord Barnard spoke with some severity. He referred to it as having been used for Party purposes and as involving acts of tyranny.

*LORD BARNARD: I quoted the word "tyranny" as having been used by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board, who said the grant was to meet certain cases of tyranny.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The noble Lord quoted certain cases in Wales. It is perfectly true that a considerable number of cases under which this grant has been applied are in Wales, but by no means all. My noble friend asked me if there were any cases in England. I have not got the figures by me, but my impression is that something like one-half are in different parts of England. Then the noble Lord asked if we had any applications for grants for Church schools. I am not able to answer that. I think it is unlikely. It is also perfectly clear that the money would not be applied to any school which did not come under Section 14 of the Education Act of 1870. With regard to some of the special cases referred to, it is perfectly true that there has been no departure from the ordinary practice of the Board in dealing with disputed cases under Section 8 of the Education Act of 1902, but the cases in which these grants have been applied have been the outcome, as a rule, of applications made by Nonconformist parents.

Here is a Denbighshire case with a very long name. It is a small remote village in the mountainous part of the county. There is a Church school there, but all the children of school age, with one exception, were Nonconformists. There were thirty-four children on the books. Only two were Church children, one of whom was under school age. That is clearly one of the cases where the wishes of the parents, of which we hear so much in different connections, would point to the school not being entirely suited to the desires of the neighbourhood. Then my noble friend, Lord Barnard, asks why in that case do they not apply the Conscience Clause, because the objection which has so often been stated, that it is difficult for a small minority in a Church school to get up and say they desire to be excused religious instruction, would not apply where the great majority desire to escape it. But the noble Lord forgets that the parents of the children, although they might not wish them to receive catechism teaching, would be extremely loth to withdraw them from religious instruction altogether; and unless the noble Lord can go further and say that the authorities of the school would be willing to substitute undenominational for denominational teaching it seems to me the point of the Conscience Clause in no way applies. In this case all the parents of the children who attended the school applied for a council school; a certain number of ratepayers signed a petition against it, but the Board decided that a school for seventy was necessary. When I say necessary, the noble Lord and the House must remember that all these schools are technically unnecessary. If they were necessary schools in the technical sense, the local authority would have to pay for them. I can assure the noble Lord opposite that there has been no departure from practice in this respect, and that it is only where the school is technically of an unnecessary kind that these grants have been forthcoming.

The noble Lord mentioned one or two other Denbighshire cases in which opposition was offered by the ratepayers. He also referred to a case in Flint borough, where there was no council school, and the parents of 250 children presented a petition in favour of such a school. Forty ratepayers objected on the ground that the school was unnecessary and also on the score of expense, but afterwards all opposition was, I am informed, withdrawn, and the case became an unopposed one. I do not, therefore, understand why that particular case was quoted by the noble Lord. I will not go into any other Welsh cases at this hour, but I will say, with regard to the position of the ratepayers, that the ratepayers are concerned to only a trifling degree with the expenditure. It is estimated that in no case in which one of these schools has been built does the cost to the parish, as distinct from the county, amount to quite a farthing rate, and therefore the ratepayers do not appear to have any very great moral *locus standi* in the matter. As to the general principle, one can merely say that the money has been applied in those cases where, apparently, it was thought to be most needed. It by no means follows that it has been applied in every case where a demand has been made. On the contrary, there have been a number of cases in which, in the opinion of the Board of Education, the circumstances did not seem to warrant the grant.

The total amount expended, or promised, has been, I think, about £70,000, but in all those cases it has been shown that there is a very distinct demand for a school of a different character from that existing at the moment. The whole proceeding is one which, we have always frankly admitted, is in a sense of a makeshift character. It has arisen out of the unlucky religious disputes that have taken place in various districts, and the impossibility of arriving so far at a Parliamentary solution of these disputes. I sincerely hope that the time will come when grants of this kind will be made altogether unnecessary as the result of legislation. Perhaps the noble Lord will excuse me if I do not repeat what I said last year on the Salterhebble school, on which there is nothing new to be said; but the Garforth case is one which demands somewhat closer investigation. The Garforth case is the one in which Mr. Justice Channell gave a decision adverse to the view of the Board of Education, and in the course of which, as the noble Lord said, he made certain observations to which I do not propose further to allude.

At Garforth there was a council school and a Church school. The council school was built after the Church school, and the idea was to set it apart for the senior children, both boys and girls. In 1907 the accommodation of the Church school, which had been rather crowded, was reduced, with the agreement of the managers, and thereby a certain number of children were excluded for whom there was room in the council school. From the purely educational point of view, from which alone the Board of Education desired to look at it, it certainly was obviously preferable that the division should be of a horizontal rather than of a vertical character, that certain standards should be taught in the one school and certain standards in the other. The local authority asked to have the three senior standards excluded, and in fact claimed the right to do so. On the other hand the managers demanded the right to turn any children they liked out of the school, and held that the local authority were compelled to find places for them in the council school. The local authority said that, from an educational point of view, their school had been intended for senior children, and that the organisation of the education of the district would be far better carried out if their plan were adopted.

The noble Lord pointed out that the President of the Board of Education reversed his decision on this point last year. That is perfectly true, and he did so owing to the fact, as he said in reply, that in the earlier decision of 3rd June, consideration was not given to the fact that the size of the premises necessitated that a certain number of children must in any case be excluded. But his attention having been drawn to this aspect of the case, he had no hesitation in giving the decision of 12th July. The ultimate result was that in a very close legal argument Mr. Justice Channell decided that the local authority were wrong and that the managers were right, and as long as that decision remains unchallenged and unreversed it is, of course, the law of the land, and there is nothing more to be said. If it is the law, then I am bound to say that, in my opinion, and in that of the Board of Education, it is a bad law from the educational point of view. It certainly does not tend to educational efficiency to the same extent that the other plan would have done. All we can say is that we are brought into these difficulties by Section 7 of the Act of 1902, which attempts to define the utterly unsatisfactory dual control which exists between the local authority and the managers of voluntary schools.

The other principal case, of Narberth in the county of Pembroke, referred to by Lord Barnard, is one of a very singular and interesting character. The charity is one of £30 a year; therefore the amount is not important, though the principle involved is. The trust lapsed, and it lapsed in rather a peculiar way, because for some time there was a desire to apply this money to the National Society's school; yet it was decided that the existing National School could not be described as the school of the foundation for the purposes of Section 13 of the Act of 1902. That decision was arrived at, I think, during the time that the noble Marquess opposite was President of the Board of Education. At any rate, it was before we came into office. Then various schemes were framed, and it is not necessary, I think, to go into the particulars of them. The important point is that my right hon. friend, the President of the Board of Education, attempted to apply in this instance the principle, which has been previously applied by agreement, but not otherwise, of splitting up a trust into two parts, and providing that part of the amount should be applied to purely educational purposes and part to purely religious purposes. That, no doubt, is a matter on which a great deal may be said from a legal point of view, and it is one which, I quite think, ought to be most fully argued.

In our view it is consonant with the general trend of educational matters, and we do believe that the tendency will be to deal ultimately, by Act of Parliament or otherwise, with trusts in that manner. But we quite agree that the question is disputable, and so far as this particular charity is concerned the scheme is still, so to speak, hung up. No decision has been come to in regard to it. The scheme was published originally so long ago as 1905, and the Board propose now to republish it, as was stated in the official letter to the trustees of 11th February last, including various provisions, one of which is in favour of the ecclesiastical side of the trust—that is to say, the handing over of the accumulated funds for purely religious purposes. But what I particularly want to state is this. If desired, the Board will be willing to hold a public inquiry for the purpose of enabling the trustees and all the parties interested to state their views fully, and incidentally such an inquiry would give an opportunity for some general argument on the somewhat novel principle of splitting these trusts into two rather than attempting to deal with them as one.

On the general question of trusts, I should like to say this, that we fully admit that the functions of the Board of Education in this matter are in one sense judicial. But it is important, at the same time, to inquire why Parliament handed over this particular jurisdiction to an administrative Department. There must have been some reason for doing it, and, as we know, it was not done by a Radical Government. The answer, I take it, is that although the jurisdiction is of a judicial character, it was obviously intended that the discretion of the Board should be exercised with regard to novel conditions, new needs of education, and matters of that kind. To put the same thing in a different way, from the purely judicial point of view the object would be to get as near as possible to the terms of the trust *cy-près*. On the other hand, from the administrative point of view the object is to decide how the money, if it were free, could best be applied to educational purposes. Not being able, probably, to use it in that way, one more or less reverses for the moment the *cy-près* doctrine, and gets as near as possible, within the terms of the trust, to the most useful and valuable educational application. That, to my mind, is just the difference between the jurisdiction as exercised by the Board and as it would be exercised by a Court.

The next case on which I would say a word is the Royston case. My noble friend Lord Dartmouth will not, I am sure, expect me to go into the whole matter again. I am as glad as he is, that Mr. Milnes has obtained what seems to be an excellent appointment under the West Riding County Council. I do not pretend to know, and it is not the concern of the Board of Education to inquire, why the council refused one post to Mr. Milnes and gave him another. We believe we were perfectly right—and I have no doubt my right hon. friend would do the same thing again—in deciding that the council's refusal to appoint Mr. Milne was given on educational grounds. But nothing will persuade us that it is the duty of the Board of Education to inquire whether those educational grounds were adequate. Under the Act of 1902 the managers may dismiss a master on religious grounds. If it is the duty of the Board of Education to inquire into the adequacy of the educational grounds in the one case, it must also be their duty to inquire into the adequacy of the religious grounds in the other.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: The Board of Education sent down an inspector to inquire as to the fitness of the man.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: But surely that does not cover the point. The point is whether the refusal to appoint this gentleman to the particular school was on educational grounds or not? That is a question of fact. If we had been obliged to believe that the inquiry was a purely bogus one, we should have said that the decision was not given on educational grounds. But there was a perfectly distinct examination, and the Board of Education could not get out of admitting that the grounds were educational. The noble Earl asks why we did not publish the report of the inspector. I think that to have done so would have been a most mischievous precedent. The inspectors of the Board of Education write with the fullest confidence, and in the course of their reports make observations about persons and institutions which it would be most unfair to make public. In the opinion of the Board it would be quite destructive of the confidence which their excellent inspectors exercise in sending reports to them if it were understood that those reports could be published on the application of someone in Parliament. I hope the noble Earl did not think that I objected to his raising the question in Parliament. That is quite another matter. What I objected to was the publication of the confidential reports of inspectors, and I am afraid that in this case we can publish no more than has been published already.

Now I come to the Swansea case, which is the last with which I need trouble the House. As to this case, a rather singular theory of administrative continuity seems to obtain in some parts of the House—a theory which, carried to the extent to which some noble Lords would desire to carry it, would make the political chief of a Department useless except for the purpose of occasionally introducing Bills. It is true that there is a certain degree of administrative continuity in all Departments, but that horse must not be ridden too hard. It is undoubtedly the case that when a Minister undertakes a particular Department he does sometimes think it necessary to administer the law as it stands in a somewhat different manner from that of his predecessor. I cannot pretend for a moment that the administration of the Board of Education, so far as I am acquainted with it—and I am rather an outsider in this matter—is identical with that which obtained when the noble Marquess was there. I think he would be very much surprised if it were. Therefore, the charge of changed administration is not one which I think ought to weigh very heavily upon my right hon. friend.

As regards the Swansea case, at this late hour perhaps I may be excused if I say very little on the building side of the question. We had, I think, two debates on it last year, certainly one long one, at which unfortunately the right rev. Prelate was not present. I look at this matter, as I say, as an outsider. I am not concerned with the administration of the Department. From my view of it the whole matter has been a very unfortunate squabble between the managers on the one side and the local education authority on the other, with occasional references, of course, from both to the Board of Education, conducted with extreme ingenuity and skill on both sides. But the skill has not always, I think, been employed to serve the best interests of education, and there has been an occasional loss of temper on both sides which did not reflect entire credit upon either party. That is the view which I take from a purely impartial standpoint.

Fortunately, the building difficulty is solved. But I think the noble Earl, Lord Cawdor, was not entirely fair to my right hon. friend on one or two points. Why, he said, did he cut the school down to 500, and object to the roof playground; or, rather, first allow the roof playground to diminished numbers, and then afterwards say he disapproved of the roof playground. The roof playground, which is considered an objectionable thing in itself and is only allowed under very special circumstances, was only permitted at all on the direct statement of the managers, fortified by the utmost detail as to the character of the neighbouring land, that it was impossible to get any more land for a proper playground. The roof playground was only permitted at all on consideration of that fact. A few weeks afterwards, fortunately, the managers found they were able to buy the land that was required to give twenty feet per child play-ground, which is not, as the noble Marquess knows, an enormous proportion per child. My right hon. friend pointed out that the roof playground, if the other could be got, was in itself an objectionable thing, and ought not to be allowed. Then, after further representation, a certain amount of roof playground was allowed, and, consequently, the larger number of children; but I do not see why the noble Earl should take that last fact as anything but an evidence of the desire of my right hon. friend to meet in every way, and even to strain a point to meet, the wishes of the managers in this matter. I do not propose to say anything more about the building, because the question of salaries is more important and also more difficult. It had been dragging on since 1904.

EARL CAWDOR: And is dragging on.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: And is still dragging on. There is no change whatever in the view of the Board that, speaking generally, it is a desirable thing that the same salaries should be paid in the voluntary schools as are paid in the council schools. The right rev. Prelate quoted a letter written in July, 1906, when Mr. Birrell was at the Board of Education, in which it was stated that the Board are not aware of any circumstances which would justify a differentiation in the salaries paid to teachers in voluntary and council schools. So far, then, that is common ground. Now the local authority, first of all, objected to being made parties to the agreements with the teachers. This, they contended, was solely the function of the managers who employed them. The Board of Education were applied to as to this, and in February, 1907, they wrote that they were taking legal opinion on the point, and added—

> "It is the duty of the managers to complete the agreements, and the managers are not relieved from this obligation by any failure of the local education authority to fix the salaries. The managers should, therefore, proceed to complete the agreements, inserting such salaries as may appear to them reasonable, failing guidance from the local authority. Should any question hereafter arise as to the salaries thus fixed the question will be determined by the Board under Section 7 of the Act of 1902."

Then the managers wrote to the local authority for guidance, and received a reply stating that the local authority sanctioned the salaries at the rate hitherto paid—that is to say, on the lower scale. The managers did not regard this as guidance; they inserted the higher scale in their agreements, and wrote to the Board of Education stating that, in the absence of guidance from the local authority, they had inserted a scale of salaries which appeared to them reasonable, and appealing to the Board to determine the question under Section 7 of the Act.

We are very simple people at the Board of Education, and we took the complaint of the managers that they had not received any guidance to mean that the local education authority had not replied to their letter. I remember the matter was debated here, and I commented, I think rather severely, on the neglect of the local authority to give any guidance. I do not know what "guidance" exactly may be taken to mean, but I should certainly have thought that, though it was not the guidance required, yet a reply stating a particular scale of salaries as the one they expected to see put into the agreements, was guidance of a kind; and I am afraid I cannot recognise the point of view of the managers so far as their interpretation of the word "guidance" is concerned. Then the Board replied that they did not understand that the authority had refused to pay the amount of the salary in the agreements, and that no question had arisen for determination. On 2nd July the managers wrote that the local authority had refused to pay it, and the Board accordingly asked the local authority, on 16th July, for their observations upon this statement. The local authority did not reply in detail to this letter until the other day, but they pointed out, in August, that they had placed the lower figure in their reply to the managers.

Then there comes a question which I can assure the noble Earl who has just sat down is not so easy of decision as he thinks, viz.: what is the meaning of the words "keep efficient." The noble Earl has told me what I did not know before, that Sir Robert Finlay thinks there is no question that to keep efficient means to pay the same salary. That is one legal opinion, but it is not a legal decision, and it, at any rate, is disputed by that highly ingenious body, the local authority of Swansea, because they have written to the Board this letter, which I think I must trouble the House with in full—

COUNTY BOROUGH OF SWANSEA.
Education Department,
Dynevor Place,
18*th March*, 1908.

SWANSEA OXFORD STREET (CHURCH OF ENGLAND) SCHOOL, No. 13*a*.

"Sir,—I am directed to reply to your letter of 10th February, 1908, in the following terms:

"(1) The Local Education Authority contends that no question within the meaning

The Earl of Crewe.

of the Education Act, 1902, Section 7, Subsection (3) has arisen between it and the managers of this school as to the salaries of the teachers therein or otherwise, and that there is therefore no question for the determination of the Board in the exercise of its appellate powers. In this letter the authority confines its observations to this preliminary point. The authority finds it difficult to state its views fully within the limits of a letter, and if the Board has any doubt upon the matter, it claims an opportunity of stating the facts and arguments in support of its contention in a case or memorandum which will raise the issues in a form which will enable the authority to obtain the decision of the High Court of Justice if the Board should be against it.

"(2) The authority begs leave to refer the Board to the long correspondence as to this school which has taken place since the appointed day, and especially to the letter of the authority to the Board, dated 20th October, 1906, which explains the views of the authority as to its relations to the managers in regard to the teachers in their school.

"(3) The authority is not aware that there is any dispute as to the facts directly relevant to its present contention. These facts seem to the authority to be the following:—

"(4) On 18th April, 1907, in answer to a request by the managers for guidance, the authority by letter informed the managers that it was prepared to consent to pay in respect of salaries for teachers in this school the salaries hitherto paid by the authority on behalf of the managers.

"(5) The authority has been informed that the managers allege that they subsequently signed written agreements with their teachers undertaking *inter alia* to pay them salaries higher than those sanctioned by the authority. The managers have not submitted these agreements to the authority, nor have they laid before the authority any facts or particulars showing or tending to show that suitable teachers could not be obtained at the salaries sanctioned by the authority. On the contrary they have, on their own showing, ignored the direction of the authority, and (as appears from the correspondence) suppressed the fact that such direction had been given in their communications to the Board.

"The facts as to the dispute concerning the reconstruction of the school which is now terminated are within the knowledge of the Board, and have no bearing on the point now raised. In accordance with the decision of the Board the authority has paid the salaries of the teachers in this school at the rate sanctioned by it. The managers claim that the authority should pay at a higher rate.

"The authority is now and has always been ready to hear any representations made or consider any facts laid before it by the managers proving the necessity of raising the salaries of teachers in their school.

"Since the authority on 18th April, 1907, in the exercise of its power of controlling expenditure gave guidance to the managers, no such representations have been made, and no such facts laid before it.

> "Under these circumstances the authority submits that the facts simply show that the managers have ignored and defied the decision of the authority. If the mere neglect or refusal of the managers to obey the authority in respect of a matter clearly entrusted to it by the Education Act, 1902, is to be deemed to raise a question within Section 7, Subsection (3), the effect would be to reduce the power of the county council to a vanishing point and transfer to the Board of Education the functions of the authority contrary to the plain intention of the Act.—I am, Sir,
>
> Your obedient Servant,
>
> (*Signed*) A. W. HALDEN."

You will see that that is a denial by the local authority of Swansea of the power of the Board of Education to interfere in this matter at all. That is a legal point on which my right hon. friend is now taking advice, and it is a matter which may ultimately come before a Court of Law. But there is, of course, this to be said, that before any steps can be taken the school has to be shown to have suffered in efficiency by the action of somebody, and it is not quite clear how, under existing circumstances, that can be done, because the salaries having been paid on the higher scale by the managers, apparently the school will not have suffered in efficiency, and therefore, no case on that point arises. I think it is no use dwelling any longer on this matter, because, as I have said, my right hon. friend is taking advice on this point, and he will then consider what course he should take.

The noble Earl opposite said something about the refusal to maintain. I regret that there is a refusal to maintain the school, but this policy is part of the whole contest that has been taking place, and it undoubtedly appeared lately that if the arrangement, which has fortunately been arrived at about the building, had not been achieved there was a possibility of the school being closed altogether. The school undoubtedly was at that time in great peril, whether owing to its own action or to that of the local authority is not to the point. That undoubtedly was the reason, though I do not say it was altogether a perfectly sound reason, for the refusal to maintain during that period.

EARL CAWDOR: It was recognised by the Board of Education as being efficient during the whole of the period.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: That undoubtedly was so. As regards the application of the Default Act, that, of course, is a question of policy. It is a parallel case to the one of which we have already heard something this session—namely, the application of the Crimes Act to Ireland. I am not prepared to assent to the noble Earl's proposition that, because an Act is on the Statute-book, you are bound to employ it if occasions arise on which it could be employed, even though you think the Act mischievous in itself and believe that the result of its application would be to do more harm than good. I have no doubt that my right hon. friend will note what has been said by the noble Earl. I hope no occasion will arise for the application of the Default Act, but, if the occasion should arise, although I cannot say that I absolutely see my right hon. friend applying it, I have no doubt that, before deciding not to apply it, he will give full consideration to everything that has been said by the noble Earl.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, at this late hour your Lordships will understand that I propose to deal very shortly with the important points raised by my noble friend behind me, whose experience of educational matters fully entitles him to be heard on these questions. While not objecting to the manner in which the noble Earl the Lord President alluded to the detail brought forward in the various speeches, I do not think I shall be contradicted when I say that he has not dealt with the principles underlying the questions submitted to him by my noble friend behind me. I quite agree with the noble Earl that it would not be advisable on the present occasion to enter into the question as to how the President of the Board of Education obtained the £100,000 which is at present under consideration, but I remember when the question was discussed in your Lordships' House last year saying that I considered the methods of obtaining that money were unconstitutional. They were certainly unusual.

I now turn to the question how that money has been allocated. On this side of the House we cannot believe that the money has been allocated absolutely fairly and impartially without being given by the Government some idea as to how it has been spent. I think the House has a right to know how the £70,000, the portion of the grant which has been expended, has been spent.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I must apologise for forgetting to state that my right hon. friend the President of the Board will issue, as soon as he can, a Return as to the places to which the money has been allocated and the amounts spent.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: That is satisfactory. But I do not think the difficulty of the President of the Board ends there. I think his difficulties are increased by the way he obtained that money. Undoubtedly the object of the right hon. Gentleman was to obtain the grant in order to create schools where a certain number of parents considered those schools wanted, and not to put any extra charge on the rates of those parishes. But, in pursuing this course, he either forgot or ignored Section 18, Subsection (1) of the Act of 1902. That section requires the county council to charge such portion as they think fit, not being less than one half or more than three-fourths, of any expenses incurred by them in respect of capital expenditure or rent on account of the provision or improvement of any public elementary school on the parish or parishes which, in the opinion of the council, are served by the school. It was undoubtedly to meet this difficulty that the President introduced the following words into his regulations—

> "The grant which will be payable to local education authorities only may be for a proportion, or, where the Board think fit, for the whole, of the expenditure incurred for the provision of the site and buildings. Any question as to the allocation of the grant arising under Section 18, Subsection (1) shall be determined by the Board."

How can that regulation be reconciled with the section in the Bill to which I have alluded? I maintain that the regulation constitutes an over-riding of the section, and is therefore *ultra vires.*

Therefore, I would ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack whether the President of the Board is acting legally in inserting this regulation with regard to this grant.

Then I come to another point. Half of the grant is to be paid into the funds of the county council. I would ask the Lord Chancellor whether the county council have power to allocate that sum of money to any particular parish. I doubt very much whether they have that power; and I should like to put those two points to the noble and learned Lord.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): I think it would be wrong to give answers off-hand to legal questions of that kind. If the noble Marquess will either put his questions on the Paper or communicate with me I will do my best to tell him what I think is the law on the subject.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: I admit that it would, perhaps, be unreasonable to expect answers at once, and I will communicate my questions to the noble and learned Lord. In the matter of new schools, again, we have reason to believe that the right hon. Gentleman has not carried out the duties imposed upon the Department by the Act of 1902 in the matter of giving public notice and other particulars. The Act provides that a certain number of ratepayers may appeal to the Board of Education on the ground that the proposal is not required. We have reason to believe that these appeals have been more or less disregarded by the Board of Education.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I think I stated that there had been cases in which applications had been made and been refused, and in regard to the instances I gave I stated that there had been in certain cases appeals by ratepayers which were listened to but were not considered to override the necessity of the school.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: Yes, but they were not dealt with by the Board of Education in the spirit of the Act. My noble friend behind me raised questions with regard to the treatment of schools in certain parts of Wales. I listened to the answer of the noble Earl, and I cannot say that he in any way justified the action complained of. The case of the Garforth school was one of great importance. The noble Earl went into that case very fully, but what I should like to ask is this: Why, when the officials of the Board of Education had on two occasions given their decision against the county council, did the right hon. Gentleman overrule their decision? Surely we are justified in thinking that there was a certain amount of partiality in his action. It is too late in the evening to deal with the case of Swansea, but I wish to say a word before sitting down with regard to the action of the Board of Education in the matter of charitable trusts. I could not have imagined a Minister making statements so inaccurate as those of Mr. McKenna in regard to charitable trusts. It was apparent to the veriest tyro that when the Education Department took over charitable trusts they took them over as a judicial body. But Mr. McKenna in the House of Commons stated that the Board of Education, as successors of the Charity Commissioners in respect of educational charities, exercised no judicial, but only administrative, powers. I was very glad to hear from the noble Earl that he threw over his colleague, because he acknowledged that the powers of the Board of Education in this matter are judicial.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I think I used the expression "*quasi*-judicial," or something of the kind.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: At any rate the noble Earl does not agree with his colleague that the powers of the Board are only administrative. In a case referred to by Lord Barnard, the President of the Board of Education certainly did not act in a judicial spirit, but as a political administrator. The Board of Education, entrusted as they are with judicial powers, should act like a Court of justice. The action of the President of the Board with regard to Merionethshire has been of a most remarkable character. The Default Act ought to have been put in force in Merionethshire some time ago. But for the first time in history a responsible Minister has only proceeded to act according to the law when told by the people who have acted guiltily that they have no objection to it. I maintain that it is the duty of the Board of Education to keep a watchful eye on all local education authorities, and not wait to be appealed to before doing ordinary justice. The policy I am advocating is the policy I pursued when I was at the head of the Board of Education. I endeavoured to act fairly and impartially to all people and all creeds, and that is what any Minister in that responsible position ought to aim at. I feel very grateful to my noble friend behind me for having raised this question, and I hope the debate will be the means of drawing attention to some of the unjust actions of the Board of Education.

*LORD BARNARD: My Lords, in view of the assurance which has been given by the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council that the public will be put in possession of all the facts with regard to the allocation of the £100,000, I ask leave to withdraw my Motion. One statement of the noble Earl has filled me with amazement—namely, the suggestion that the question of changes in the trusts of charitable endowments will on future occasions be decided by public assemblies. I may call attention to that matter on a future occasion.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 23rd March, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :— Huddersfield Water Bill [Lords]; Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill; Derby Gas Bill; Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Camborne Water Bill; Herne Bay Pier Bill [Lords]; Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Bromley and Crays Gas Bill. Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Daybrook; and H. Woolley; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Ardrossan; Crook (two); Glasgow; and Inverness; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Inverness, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Edinburgh; and Surbiton; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 19th March; Mr. Lloyd-George]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 95.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3964 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POSTAL AGREEMENT (GERMANY).

Copy presented, of Postal Agreement for an exchange of Money Orders between the Post Office of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the German Empire, dated 9th January, 1908, 8th February, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

INVERNESS COUNTY COUNCIL AND ALLOTMENTS.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 11th March; Mr. Sinclair]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 96.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Belgian Imports and Exports.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lancashire, N.W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether, in addition to the information asked for by the hon. Member for Dumbartonshire, he can give similar information with regard to the estimated population, and the imports exports, and re-exports, together with the total of these, for Belgium for the year 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Complete information with regard to Belgian imports and exports is not available for 1907. Information can at present only be given in respect of what are described in the Belgian official statistics as "Principal Articles," which in 1906 formed over 90 per cent. of the whole. The following table and its explanatory note gives the particulars as to "Principal Articles" in a similar form to the statement given in answer to my hon. friend the Member for Dumbartonshire—

Foreign Trade and Population of Belgium in 1907.

	1907 (Principal Articles only).*
Foreign trade :—	£
Imports for home consumption	137,144,000
Exports of domestic produce	106,881,000
Total of above	244,025,000
Estimated population	7,200,000

Foreign trade per head of the population :

	£	s.	d.
Imports for home consumption	19	0	11
Exports of domestic produce	14	16	11
Total of above	33	17	10

The following note is extracted from the Belgian official Trade Accounts : It frequently happens that, in order to avoid the transit trade regulations, goods not subject to duty on importation are declared for consumption instead of being declared for ultimate exportation. As a result the figures of "special" trade, both imports and exports, are inflated at the expense of the "transit" trade. Thus cereals (other than oats), raw hides and skins, raw animal products and crude mineral products not specially mentioned in the Customs tariff, raw textile materials, gums, and other articles not subject to duty on importation, which are destined for transit, are declared first for consumption and subsequently for exportation. But as on exportation it is not possible to distinguish the country of origin of these goods, the Customs authorities are compelled to record such articles as Belgian produce.

Position of New Post Office at Saltcoats.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) : To ask the Postmaster-General, whether in fixing the site of the new post office at Saltcoats, in North Ayrshire, he has taken into consideration the representations of the ratepayers that the situation should be a central one.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) This matter is still under consideration. In selecting premises for a new post office, the representations of the ratepayers will be borne in mind as far as is practicable with due regard to economy.

Departmental Transfers in Royal Dockyards.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton) : To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether it is the custom in the Royal Dockyards, when they are short of work in one department and busy in another, to transfer the workmen from the department that is short of work to the one that is busy ; and, if so, is the custom being adhered to at Chatham at the present time.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) When suitable men are available, it is the practice to make transfers from one department to another to meet fluctuations in the work and to avoid discharges ; but at the present time there are no workmen so transferred at Chatham.

Deportation of Indians at Vancouver.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme) : To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, what were the grounds on which the Indians landing from the "Monteagle" at Vancouver were ordered to be deported by the Canadian Federal Authority ; did the provincial authorities oppose their landing or did opposition come only from the Federal Authority ; and does the decision of the Federal Authority have the approval of His Majesty's Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Secretary of State has at present no information on the subject beyond that published in the Press on the 19th inst.

Construction of Railway from Chiromo to Blantyre.

SIR C. HILL (Shrewsbury) : To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the position of affairs in regard to the Shiré Highlands Railway, which is under contract with His Majesty's Government to construct a railway from

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*Provisional figures based on prices prevailing in 1906.

Chiromo to Blantyre within five years from December, 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The rails of the line have been laid into Blantyre, but, mainly owing to difficulties in the transport of materials on the Shiré river, the railway was not in a condition to be opened for traffic by December 1907, and an extension of time until the end of June 1908 has been granted to the company.

Pay of Writers in the Army Ordnance Department.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office what are the rates of pay of the various grades of writers in the Army Ordnance Deparment; whether these rates of pay are to be increased, and to what extent; whether, and to what extent, they vary in out-stations, and for what reason; whether the writers are allowed to present petitions in cases of grievance; and what are the conditions as to sick pay and sick leave applying to this branch of the service.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The rates of pay of writers in the Army Ordnance Department at home stations are as follows:—Woolwich Arsenal and Pimlico (R.A.C.D.): Foreman writers, 54s., by 2s. annually to 63s. a week; First class writers, 39s., by 2s. annually to 51s. a week; Second class writers, 24s., by 2s. annually to 36s. a week. No second-class writer to rise above 30s. a week until he is specially certified to be actually employed on work superior to that of copyist, and qualified by his ability and application for further increase. Other stations: Foreman writer, 33s., after three years' service 36s. a week; writers, 22s., after three years, 24s., thence by 3s. triennially to 30s. In London the minimum is 24s. as at Woolwich. At Edinburgh the minimum is 24s., but writers there remain six years at 24s. before being given an increment to 27s. The above are the only variations at out stations. The higher scale for Woolwich Arsenal and Pimlico is due to the more varied and responsible nature of the work. No increases of these rates are contemplated. The writers are allowed to present petitions through the proper local authority. The conditions as to sick pay and sick leave at all Home stations are as follows:—Those who joined before 1st April, 1900 (at Pimlico 1st August, 1900): Full pay for two months and, if recommended, extension up to three months at two-thirds pay if over twenty years' service, or at half. pay if under twenty years' service. Those who joined after 31st March, 1900 (at Pimlico 31st July, 1900): Half-pay for three months, and, if recommended, extension up to two months at same rate.

Honorary Promotion for Retired Regular Officers serving with the Auxiliary Forces.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether retired officers of the Regular Army who serve as brigade-majors in the Auxiliary Forces are ineligible for the honorary promotion which is granted to officers of the Auxiliary Forces who serve in the same capacity; if so, whether he will correct this difference in the regulations for the Territorial Force; and whether he will grant honorary promotion to retired officers of the Regular Army, who have already served, or are now serving, as brigade-majors of the Auxiliary Forces.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Officers of the Auxiliary Forces have hitherto been eligible for a step of honorary rank under certain conditions after certain specified periods of service, but the post of brigade-major, whether held by a retired Regular officer or not, did not entitle him to honorary rank as such. Honorary rank will not be granted to officers in the Territorial Force, but officers now holding such rank in the Yeomanry and Volunteers will retain it on transfer to the Territorial Force. The reply to the last part of the Question is in the negative.

Building of the three "Invincibles."

MR. THORNTON (Clapham): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the three "Invincibles," now in process of building, were contracted out for completion within two years; and what were the respective dates on which they were commenced.

(*Answered by Mr. Lambert.*) These three ships were contracted out for completion in two and a half years. The actual dates of laying down were as follows:—"Invincible," 2nd April, 1906; "Inflexible" 5th February, 1906; "Indomitable," 1st March, 1906; but in each case the contract period of two and a half years runs from 21st November, 1905.

German "Dreadnoughts."

MR. THORNTON: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can inform the House upon what dates the first four German "Dreadnoughts" were laid down.

(*Answered by Mr. Lambert.*) We have no official information, the German Government not having published the dates, but according to statements made in the German newspapers these vessels were laid down in the course of last summer.

Shorthand Writers under the Criminal Appeal Act.

MR. J. W. WILSON (Worcestershire, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what steps have been taken by the Treasury, or otherwise within the knowledge of the Department, to arrange for the appointment of shorthand writers for the service of the Courts under the provisions of Section 16 of The Criminal Appeal Act, 1907; what terms have been proposed; and whether those terms are in accordance with the hitherto recognised scale of remuneration for duly qualified and professionally responsible service of that nature.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The appointment of shorthand writers for the purpose of the Criminal Appeal Act does not rest with the Treasury. I understand that the Home Office has addressed a circular to recorders and chairmen of quarter sessions on the subject. The terms of payment fixed by the Treasury are a guinea for each day's necessary attendance, with 8d. per folio for transcripts, this payment to cover the supply of a copy of the transcript also when required by the officer for whom the transcript is ordered. For any further copies of transcript supplied, either for public use or for parties interested, 1½d. a folio will be payable. The rates do not differ materially from those which the Treasury has hitherto paid when it has been necessary to employ a shorthand writer in legal cases.

MR. J. W. WILSON: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will take steps to secure that before the proposed terms for shorthand writing under Section 16 of The Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, are further suggested to local shorthand writers, a reply is made to the representations submitted to the Treasury upon the subject in January by the council of the Institute of Journalists, on behalf of qualified shorthand writers, being journalists, in all parts of the country; and whether he can give any information as to when the Rules of Court framed under the Act will be laid before the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The representations which were submitted to the Treasury by the Institute of Journalists were duly considered before the terms of payment for shorthand writing under the Criminal Appeal Act were fixed, but the communication did not appear to the Treasury to call for any reply beyond the usual acknowledgment of receipt. I understand that the Rules of Court under the Act were laid before Parliament on Wednesday last and will be available for Members shortly.

Scottish Jury System.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): To ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware of the feeling in Scotland among men liable to be summoned as jurymen against so large a number as thirty-six being called to appear, at inconvenience and expense, when only twelve are required, and when the cases are often of the most trivial nature; and whether in his proposed legislation he will include provisions to remedy this grievance, and so reduce the prevailing discontent with the jury system.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw.*) I am not aware that there is any "prevailing discontent with the jury system," or that there is any foundation for this suggestion. One or two details, such as those referred to in the Question do seem to require improvement. If it is found, for instance, that a full panel could be selected from a smaller number of jurymen summoned that point would be worthy of consideration with a view to a remedy, and I shall look into the matter in that spirit.

Age Retirement of Officers in the Territorial Force.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers in the new Territorial Army on attaining the age of forty-five years, are to be compulsorily retired if they have not reached the rank of major.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply is in the negative.

Pay of Quartermasters.

MR. G. A. HARDY (Suffolk, Stowmarket): To ask the Secretary of State for War what would be the average annual increased charge on the non-effective Vote if Article 529 (b) of the Royal Warrant were amended so as to allow of quartermasters receiving £10 a year increase in their rate of retired pay for each year's service in excess of twenty years up to a maximum of £250 a year, as they are now liable to a reduction of £10 a year to a minimum of £150 for any year's service short of twenty years' qualifying service as laid down in Article 490.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) On the assumption that quartermasters would retire voluntarily at the same time as they do now, the result for the whole number of quartermasters would ultimately be an extra charge of about £25,000 a year.

Payment of Larkin and Stewart of the Irish Ordnance Survey.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether payments of wages are recorded as having been made during the months of January, February and March 1907, at Forkhill, in Ireland, in the Ordnance Survey to workmen named Larkin and Stewart; when and where were these men first employed, and when and where were they discharged; and can he give the name of the officer who saw these men during any of the days they were supposed to have been employed in the Ordnance Survey.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The persons to whom my hon. friend refers are recorded as having been employed at Forkhill for temporary duty as tape boys, Stewart on 10th December 1906, Larkin on 1st January, 1907, and both as having been paid up to 22nd March, 1907, and discharged at that place. There is no record that they were seen by any officer during the time specified.

Payment by the Weir Trustees to the Bolingbroke Hospital.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): To ask the hon. Member for the Elland Division, as representing the Charity Commissioners, whether he is aware that, in the month of July, 1907, the trustees of the Weir Hospital Trust for Streatham gave, or caused to be given, to the governors of the Bolingbroke Hospital a sum of £5,000 out of the funds of the said trust; will he say whether such application of the trust money was justified by any, and what, terms of the will of the testator; whether such application of the trust money was made with the sanction of the Charity Commissioners, and, if so, under what statutory or other power was such sanction given; whether any, and what, steps have been, or will be, taken, to restore such sum of £5,000 to the trust fund; whether he is aware that immediately following such gift two of the assenting trustees were made life governors of the Bolingbroke Hospital; that on the day before the Wandsworth Borough Council met to elect three representatives to the committee of management of the trust, in place of the retiring members, the trustees of the said fund co-opted two of such retiring representatives to be life trustees; whether such co-option was in direct contravention of the terms of the will; and, if so, whether any steps have been, or will be, taken to remove such illegally appointed trustees, or to prevent them from acting in the administration of the trust.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) The payment of £5,000 in question was made with the sanction of the Commissioners as an advance in accordance with terms agreed upon between the trustees of the Weir Charity and the committee of the Bolingbroke Hospital, under which part of the Weir endowment was to be applied for the enlargement and maintenance of that hospital, in consideration of advantages to be secured for the benefit of patients from Streatham and the neighbourhood. At the date of the payment the Commissioners had expressed their willingness to publish a scheme for the administration of the Weir Charity in substantial accordance with the proposals of the trustees. The Commissioners are now engaged in framing a scheme for this purpose with considerable variations from the original proposals, and in whatever arrangement is ultimately decided upon the payment in question will be accounted for. The Commissioners understand that all the Weir trustees have been nominated life-governors of the Bolingbroke Hospital. With regard to the co-option referred to by the hon. Member the Commissioners were informed in December, 1907, that the legality of the co-option would not be pressed and that the co-opted persons had agreed not to act.

Payment to Italy and France for Conveyance of British Mails.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): To ask the Postmaster-General what is the amount of money paid to Italy and France for conveyance of the Indian, Australian, China, and the Eastern mails, the last financial year, from and to Brindisi and Naples.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The sums paid for the transport by French and Italian railway services of British correspondence conveyed by packets of the Peninsular and Oriental Line to and from India, Ceylon, Australia, China, and the Far East, and that for Australia and Ceylon conveyed by packets of the Orient Line, for the financial year to 31st March, 1907, were as follows—

	On Outward Mails.	On Homeward Mails.	Total.
	£	£	£
To France - -	46,323	13,663	59,986
To Italy - -	35,732	11,613	47,345

Payment for mails sent to this country by the route of Naples is effected by the Colonies concerned and is not included in the foregoing amounts. Besides these amounts payment for Continental transit of outward parcel mails sent by the packets of the Peninsular and Oriental and the Orient Lines is made to France and Italy. The payment to France for the financial year to 31st March, 1907, was £1,062 and to Italy £541.

Trunk Calls—Fees for Extension of Time.

MR. BRIGHT (Oldham): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can arrange, in the case of long-distance telephone calls, that a second call, or extension of the time for speaking, can be allowed at less than double of the original fee, as the very short time allowed deters people from trying long-distance calls.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The greater part of the telephone trunk calls made during business hours occupy less than three minutes, and, in view of the large and urgent demand for such communication, a change which would increase the average length of conversations would not be to the general benefit.

Split Turns of Duty in the Post Office.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the Hobhouse Committee recommended that care should be taken to reduce inconvenient split turns of duty and to confine as far as possible the day's work of individual officers to within a period of twelve hours; whether his assurance that he has accepted the recommendations of the Committee applies to this proposal; and whether, in view of the fact that the scheme dates from 1st January, 1908, he will state whether any steps have been taken to improve the turns of duty at small offices.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I hape not lost sight of the recommendation* referred to. The question of reducing the number of split duties and of improving the hours of attendance will continue to receive full consideration in connection with revisions of force and at all other suitable opportunities.

Second Division Clerks in the Savings Bank Department.

SIR G. KEKEWICH (Exeter): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury why Second Division clerks of old standing in the Savings Bank Department of the Post Office have not been allowed to exercise the option, given by Clause 5 of the Order in Council of 21st December, 1907, to choose between continuing on the scale of salary now in force or adopting that prescribed by the Order, seeing that the Order offers the option to all Second Division clerks without distinction.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) My hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. An opportunity of exercising the option given by Clause 5 of the Order in Council of 21st December, 1907, is being afforded to all the Second Division clerks in the Savings Bank Department of the Post Office, with the exception of those who are excluded from the operation of Clause 5 under the terms of Clause 1 of the Order in Council of 19th March, 1908.

Inquiry into Working of the Land Transfer Acts.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether the inquiry into the working of the Land Transfer Acts, recently promised by the Lord Chancellor, is to be by Royal Commission or by Committee; whether such inquiry will include the question of the further extension of compulsory registration of title under those Acts; and whether it will commence at a sufficiently early date to enable a report to be presented during the present session.

(*Answered by Sir W. Robson.*) The matter is not yet settled; but, so far as present intention goes, the inquiry would be by Royal Commission. It will include the question of the further extension of compulsory registration of title under the Acts mentioned, and I hope it will commence at a sufficiently early date to enable a Report to be presented during the present session.

Hollesley Bay Labour Colony.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the estate in the occupation of the Hollesley Bay labour colony has been valued since its purchase; and whether he can state how much of the £53,812, being the gross cost of maintenance of the colony up to 31st March, 1907, is represented by the improvements in buildings, planting, and reclamations effected on the estate.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. I understand that the value of the permanent improvements effected at the Hollesley Bay farm colony during the period between 12th December, 1905, and 30th September last was estimated by the valuers employed by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London at £3,154. This figure represents the improved value of the estate as a labour colony. The improved market value of the estate at 30th September last was estimated by the valuers to be £1,933. In addition a sum of about £4,200 is estimated to have accrued to the value of the stock, stores, plants, etc., at the farm colony.

Irish Land Stock.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he now hopes to make his promised statement as to the flotation of Irish Land Stock.

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*Paragraph 279 of Select Committee's Report.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I hope to be in a position to make a statement very shortly, but I am not yet able to say the precise date.

Beer Brewing.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many liquid and how many standard barrels of beer were brewed in 1878, and in each subsequent year down to the present time.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The following statements give the information asked for, so far as it is available. It is only within the last few years that a record has been kept of the number of liquid barrels—

Number of Standard Barrels of Beer brewed in the half-year ended 31st March, 1881, and in each subsequent year.

Year ended 31st March.	United Kingdom.
	Number.
Half-year October, 1880, to March, 1881 *	13,980,291
1882	27,870,526
1883	27,140,891
1884	27,750,091
1885	27,986,493
1886	27,194,893
1887	27,948,883
1888	28,236,446
1889	28,644,793
1890	30,868,315
1891	31,927,303
1892	32,201,167
1893	32,104,330
1894	32,182,738
1895	31,678,486
1896	33,825,959
1897	34,202,064
1898	35,632,131
1899	36,498,204
1900	37,090,986
1901	36,394,565
1902	35,899,313
1903	36,182,158
1904	35,318,053
1905	34,410,537
1906	34,021,879
1907	34,338,651

The number of liquid barrels of beer produced can only be given for the following years—

Year ended 31st March.	United Kingdom. Number.
1902	36,887,260
1903	37,153,978
1904	36,329,813
1905	35,415,523
1906	35,066,094
1907	35,406,797

Licensing Compensation.

Mr. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will state the compensation which the "Sawyer Arms" at Hertford, and the "Queen" at Codicote would receive respectively under the 1904 Act if fixed by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, if fixed on the basis of Lord Justice Kennedy's judgment; and what they would receive respectively in each of the fourteen years under the proposals of the present Licensing Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) Although the trade done did not amount to a barrel of beer a week in either case, the compensation actually awarded on the basis of Lord Justice Kennedy's judgment was £451 for the "Sawyer's Arms," and £362 for the "Queen." The first awards by the Inland Revenue Department on the basis adopted before the Kennedy judgment were £105 and £175 respectively. If these beer-houses were closed under the Licensing Bill provisions, compensation would be based on new valuations of the premises, licensed and unlicensed, and these valuations I am unable to give.

Reinstatement of John F. M'Quade.

Mr. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps have been taken by the Estates Commissioners to restore Mr. John F. M'Quade to the holding from which he was evicted on the Irvine estate, near Ederney, county Fermanagh; whether they have inspected and endeavoured to acquire the holding from the new tenant, and if the latter is willing to sell; and what has caused delay in reinstating Mr. M'Quade.

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*Figures cannot be given for the years prior to the imposition of the Beer Duty (October, 1880).

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the evicted tenant's application, and have had the holding inspected. They understand that the new tenant is willing to sell his interest in the holding, provided he receives compensation, and they are considering the question of acquiring such interest with the object of reinstating the evicted tenant. There has been no undue delay in dealing with the case, regard being had to the priority of other claims.

Irish Constabulary Prosecutions.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, can he say whether a rule exists which imposes on the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary the necessity of having at least two successful prosecutions every month in the local petty sessions.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) There is no rule in the Royal Irish Constabulary to the effect stated, nor is there any rule whatever dealing with the number of prosecutions by members of the force.

Sale of the Stubber Estate, Queen's County.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what progress has been made with the sale of the Stubber estate, Aughavoe, Queen's County; and how the negotiations at present stand.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners made an offer to Mr. R. H. Stubber for his untenanted land. The owner declined to accept the offer, and asked the Commissioners to increase it. This they refused to do, and they are now considering what further action they can take in the matter.

Dockyards Established Staffs.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Prime Minister whether, having regard to the fact that the question of the reopening of the list of established men in His Majesty's dockyards is now being considered by His Majesty's Government, as distinct from the Admiralty, and that the establishment was one of the inducements held out to hired men when entering the Royal dockyards, he will take steps to secure the speedy reopening of the establishment.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) My right hon. friend has requested that I should reply to this Question. I cannot at present add to the statement already made, that this question is under the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Commonwealth Naval Contribution.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is yet in a position to make any statement, or lay upon the Table any papers, relating to the correspondence which has recently passed between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on the subject of the alteration in and additions to the Commonwealth contribution to the Royal Navy.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. LAMBERT, Devonshire, South Molton): There is nothing to be added at present to the reply given on the 5th March to the hon. Member for East Clare.

Obsolete War Vessels in the Kyles of Bute.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many obsolete war vessels still remain in the Kyles of Bute; whether it is intended that these shall be sold, or utilised in the event of an outbreak of war; if the former, when it is proposed to sell them, and will they be sold without the breaking-up condition, at least so far as their engines are concerned.

MR. LAMBERT: There are three vessels in the Kyles of Bute, two of which will be sold probably before April, 1909, for breaking-up in the United Kingdom. It cannot be stated at present how the third vessel will be disposed of or utilised.

MR. WATT: Will the Admiralty insist on the "breaking-up" condition?

MR. LAMBERT: Certainly, if it is imposed.

Rosyth.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can furnish any details with regard to the extent and nature of the works let under contract at Rosyth.

MR. LAMBERT: A tender was accepted by the Admiralty on the 16th inst., for the construction of a new public road in place of an existing road which runs through Admiralty property.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): What was the amount of the contract?

MR. LAMBERT: About £7,600.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): When does the hon. Gentleman expect the main contract to be made?

MR. LAMBERT: I cannot add anything to the statement I made the other night.

Naval Scarves Contract.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the Admiralty has placed an order for about 100,000 black silk scarves with the firm of Messrs. J. and T. Brocklehurst, Limited, silk manufacturers, of Macclesfield, and, if so, was this order offered to public or limited tender, and was the lowest tender accepted.

MR. LAMBERT: An order for 75,000 scarves was placed with this firm. Eleven firms were invited to tender. The lowest tender for a suitable sample was accepted.

Royal Marine Artillery Afloat.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can give from the official Monthly Return of the Deputy Adjutant General of the Royal Marines, which excludes the Royal Naval School of Music, the proportion of Royal Marine Artillery embarked afloat for the latest date for which the figures are available.

MR. LAMBERT: 65 per cent. of all ranks.

Royal Marine Artillery Ashore.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that, whereas on the 12th December, 1903, 51 per cent. of the Royal Marine Artillery were quartered on shore, this proportion has steadily reduced to 28 per cent. on the 7th December, 1907; whether the Board will cause inquiries to be made as to the effect of so large a proportion being embarked on the special training of the corps and the requalifying courses of men after a period of service at sea, with special reference to the scarcity of officers at the barracks; and whether he can state if the entries of marine officers have been stopped.

MR. LAMBERT: The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The Admiralty see no necessity for the inquiry suggested. The entries to the Royal Marines are now being made through Osborne alone.

Battleships for Brazil.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can give the House any information as to the battleships of the "Dreadnought" type now building for the Brazilian Government; and whether he will give the House an assurance that the Government will take effective steps to prevent these vessels falling into the hands of other Powers, and thus disturbing the balance of naval power, not contemplated by the shipbuilding programmes of such powers.

MR. LAMBERT: It is understood that two battleships of the "Dreadnought" type are now being built for the Brazilian Government, one by Messrs. Armstrong and one by Messrs. Vickers. The Admiralty have no reason to suppose that transfer of these ships to any other foreign Power is contemplated.

New Torpedo Destroyers.

MR. NIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the efforts now being made by Germany in the building of torpedo destroyers, he will inform the House when the sixteen vessels of that type in the new naval programme for the year are to be put out to tender.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is proposed to lay down these vessels towards the end of 1908.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Will the hon. Gentleman represent to the Admiralty the advisability, in view of the present depressed condition of the shipbuilding trade, of letting these contracts at the earliest possible moment, not only to benefit the Exchequer and the taxpayers and to relieve the pressure on a depressed industry, but at the same time to secure the use of these much needed vessels as soon as possible.

Mr. LAMBERT: I shall be pleased to convey the representations of the hon. Gentleman to my colleagues at the Admiralty.

New Battleships.

Mr. NIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if the "Bellerophon," "Collingwood," and "Superb," will be ready for service with the Fleet within twenty-four months of the date upon which they were commenced.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, so far as can be seen at present.

Good Conduct Pay in the Navy.

Mr. MALLET (Plymouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether in view of the increase of £8,000 for good conduct pay in this year's Estimates, it is intended to grant good conduct pay in future to those ratings who at present have good conduct badges without good conduct pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, Sir; the £8,000 referred to is to provide for the automatic increase in the number of badges to which pay is attached.

Warrant Officers.

Mr. MALLET: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the increase contemplated in this year's Estimates of £9,125 for warrant officers, it is intended to promote any new ratings to that rank.

Mr. LAMBERT: No portion of this increase relates to the possible establishment of warrant rank for certain classes who do not now possess it.

Officers of Cadet Corps and the Territorial Force.

Earl WINTERTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers of school cadet corps, forming part of the Officers Training Corps, will be permitted also to hold commissions in the local Territorial battalion to which their companies are attached; and, if so, whether their camp attendance and drills with the Officers Training Corps will enable them to become efficient.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Officers of the Officers Training Corps will be gazetted to Commissions as Officers of the Territorial Force. The units of the Officers Training Corps will not be affiliated to local Territorial units. Officers of the Training Corps or officers of a Territorial unit seconded for service with the Training Corps will do duty entirely with the Training Corps. If the noble Lord will kindly refer to the Special Army Order, published on March 16th, he will, I think, find full information in regard to the Training Corps.

The Deficiency of Officers.

Mr. A. L. STANLEY (Cheshire, Eddisbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will state the amount he has placed in the Estimates for making good the deficiency of officers; and whether he can give any estimate of the number of reserve officers of the new class he hopes to get in the course of this year.

Mr. HALDANE: The amount included in the Estimates of 1908–9 under the new scheme for the provision of Reserve Officers is £50,000. I cannot usefully attempt to give any estimate of the numbers of the new class likely to join during the year, but I shall be glad to get as many as will come. In addition I hope that a very large proportion of the existing Militia officers will join the new Reserve. I am glad to take this opportunity of correcting the mistake which occurred in the report of my speech on Army Estimates this year with regard to the sum available for this purpose.

The Northumberland Fusiliers—Transfer of Officers.

EARL WINTERTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether twelve officers of the Northumberland Fusiliers have been notified that they will be compulsorily transferred to other regiments without compensation; and, if so, what are the reasons for this departure from the policy previously laid down.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.): At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for War if the Army Council is about to transfer a large number of officers from the Northumberland Fusiliers and other regiments; whether consideration will be paid to the great expense which will be incurred by such officers in removals and outfits; and if the fact that many officers have sacrificed Army seniority to join these regiments on account of territorial and family associations will be recognised.

MR. HALDANE: The reduced regiments have a large excess of officers over Establishment. So far, very few officers have volunteered for transfer to other regiments, and in the interests of the reduced regiments, the Army Council have deemed it expedient to resort to compulsory transfer. Officers so transferred will be compensated for any necessary expense entailed in change of uniform.

MR. LAMBTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of my Question?

MR. HALDANE: Yes; that point will be considered and taken into account.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): On what basis will the compensation be calculated?

MR. HALDANE: They will be compensated for any expense involved by the change of uniform. That is the general principle, and any specially hard case will be considered.

Territorial Force—Walking-out Dress.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what decision has been arrived at in connection with the walking-out dress of the Territorial Force?

MR. HALDANE: No decision has yet been reached, except that they are to have walking-out dress.

Honorary Rank in the Territorial Force.

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with a view to encourage present officers to continue in, and fresh officers to join, the new Territorial Force, he can see his way to accelerate the granting of honorary rank after twelve years service instead of fifteen years, as at present?

MR. HALDANE: Honorary rank will not be given in addition to substantive rank in the Territorial Force. Brevet promotion for distinguished service in the field or for meritorious or distinguished service of an exceptional nature other than in the field will however be granted. As I have already informed the House, officers now holding honorary rank in the Yeomanry or Volunteers will retain it on transfer to the Territorial Force.

Volunteer Officers Uniform Expenses.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the cost of uniform and the other expenses of Volunteer officers, he will give instructions that changes in uniform now rendered necessary by the substitution of the Territorial Army for the Volunteers shall be as few as possible and their expense rigidly kept down; and whether the War Office will defray the expenses caused to Volunteer officers by such changes.

MR. HALDANE: As I have already explained to the House, when the transfer necessitates an alteration of uniform the officer will be eligible for a grant to cover the actual expenditure involved for purchase or alteration of uniform not exceeding £20 in all. I can assure my hon. friend that the principle of observing economy in regard to the dress of the Territorial Force has been kept in view.

Canadian Army Rifle.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the investigations of the Public Accounts Committee of the Canadian Parliament in respect to the Canadian-made rifle which has taken the place of the British-made rifle with which the Canadian forces were formerly armed; whether the essential parts of this rifle are not made in Canada but in Pittsburg, Hartford, Attleboro', and other parts of the United States; and whether, seeing that in case of national emergency the Canadian supply of rifles might be seriously affected, he proposes to make any suggestion on the subject to the Canadian Government.

MR. HALDANE: I do not propose to take any steps to interfere in this matter which is one that must be left to the Canadian Government to settle.

Indian Mutiny Pensions.

*MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that, where a veteran is in receipt of a pension on account of twenty-one years service served subsequent to the Indian Mutiny, and afterwards on attaining seventy years of age becomes entitled to the extra 1s. a day on account of the Indian Mutiny service, it is the habit, instead of adding the two pensions together, to make a deduction from the above mentioned 1s., to the loss of the soldier; and whether he will remedy this in the cases now existing.

MR. HALDANE: An Indian Mutiny veteran or other soldier who has served in a campaign and is already in receipt of a pension does not get an extra 1s. a day on attaining the age of seventy, but may be granted an increase up to 1s. if his pension previously was less.

*MR. WATT: Can the right hon. Gentleman give any particular reason why a man in these circumstances should lose this 1s.?

MR. HALDANE asked for notice of a Question with reference to a particular case.

The Scottish Horse.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that recruiting for the Scottish Horse is left in the hands of the troopers, who can object to and prevent the recruiting of any individual on account of social inequality; and, if not, whether he will have the matter inquired into with a view to the practice being stopped.

MR. HALDANE: The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief concerned has been requested to furnish a Report on this matter.

MR. BOWERMAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a young fellow with a strong desire to join the regiment was rejected, on the ground that he was badly dressed and did not wear a collar and tie?

MR. HALDANE: I am not aware of it, but inquiry is being made.

Secretaries of County Associations.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is the intention of the Army Council to deprive a secretary to a Territorial Force Association of his temporary retired pay awarded under Article 510 of the Army Pay Warrant.

MR. HALDANE: Officers drawing retired pay while serving in the Militia under the conditions of Article 510 of the Pay Warrant will not be eligible for the post of secretary. If they wish to take such a post they must leave the Militia. Officers serving in the Yeomanry under the conditions of Article 510 must be seconded before taking the post of secretary, and consequently cannot fulfil the conditions as to attending the annual training under which the grant of £100 per annum is made. In all other cases where officers already in receipt of retired pay are appointed secretaries of County Associations, they will continue to draw their retired pay as before.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of a specific case in the Home Counties in which an officer who has been appointed secretary of a County Association at a salary of £50 has by doing so forfeited retired pay at the rate of £100 a year? Does the War Office intend to make it impossible for officers of military experience to accept these appointments without serious pecuniary loss?

MR. HALDANE: That is founded on complete misapprehension. If an officer is on retired pay, then he can take a County Association secretaryship and draw the salary in addition to the retired pay. If he is paid the £100 under the Article 510 for officiating in some capacity as a retired regular in the Militia, he cannot fulfil the two functions for the State, and he cannot be paid for two duties which are incompatible.

MR. ASHLEY: Is not the retired pay in consideration of services rendered while the officer in question was in the Army, and has nothing to do with the Militia?

MR. HALDANE: No. The case put under the article is a case where the officer has actually been appointed to a position in the Army, Militia, or Yeomanry, as the case may be, which is inconsistent with his giving his time to the duties of the other position. He cannot do both, and cannot be paid for both.

MR. ASHLEY: But is not the retired pay which this gentleman receives pay given him in consideration of Army service, and has nothing to do with Militia service?

MR. HALDANE: No; the theory is that if an officer undertakes duties in connection with the Militia he cannot also undertake duties in connection with the County Association.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA: In counties where the secretary's salary is £50, and the officer appointed is in receipt of a pension of £100 under the Army Pay Warrant he then is called upon to pay £50 out of his own pocket for the privilege of serving as secretary to the County Association.

MR. HALDANE: If he has retired pay as such he can take the position of secretary to the Association, but if, on the other hand, he fills a position in the Militia for which he is paid, then he must resign it if he desires the appointment of secretary.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA rose to put a further Question.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think notice should be given of any further Question.

Expert Opinion on the Army Scheme.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when he intends to lay upon the Table of the House the documents compiled by Sir John French, Sir Neville Lyttelton, and General Haig, Director of Military Training, from which he quoted at length in the debate of Thursday last

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member will find these documents printed *in extenso* in *Hansard.*

In reply to Mr. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn),

MR. HALDANE was understood to say that these officers were among the greatest experts in artillery this country possessed.

MR. REMNANT rose to put a further Question.

*MR. SPEAKER said notice should be given.

The Sale of the "Coach and Horses" by the War Office.

MR BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware that the Coach and Horses Inn at Portsmouth was recently sold by the War Office for the sum of £10,000 shortly before the introduction of the Licensing Bill, and that the purchaser complains that had he been aware of the intention of the Government to attach a time limit of fourteen years to all licences he would not have purchased the property at the price he paid, and that the profits of the inn are inadequate to enable him during the contemplated time limit to provide the necessary sinking found for the redemption of his licence; and whether, in these circumstances, the Government will consider the justice of either annulling the contract for the sale or returning a substantial portion of the purchase price.

MR. HALDANE: No complaint has reached the War Office. I am unable to give any explanation further than that already afforded to the House in reply to previous Questions on this subject. The Government do not propose to annul this contract.

MR. REMNANT: Before the Government fixed a reserve price in this case, had its own valuer placed the value of the licence of this house at £7,500?

MR. BOTTOMLEY: Before he concluded the sale of this property, was the right hon. Gentleman personally acquainted with the terms of the Licensing Bill?

MR. HALDANE: The property was put up in the ordinary course. It was well known to the public that the Government proposed to deal with the whole question of licensing.

MR. JOHN WARD: Is it usual for purchasers of Government property under the War Office, when they make a bad bargain, to expect compensation?

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): Does the right hon. Gentleman think that the intention of the Government to impose a time-limit should have had a material effect in this transaction, and that its failure to disclose this fact was not a material omission; and under the circumstances, does the right hon. Gentleman consider it fair that the War Office should retain the whole of the purchase money, while it is quite clear that the purchaser—[Cries of "Speech," and "Order."]

MR. HALDANE: I have already said that no complaint has reached the War Office from the purchaser, and if there had been any complaint he would have found it very difficult to formulate it in any intelligible language.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: Has not the right hon. Gentleman, in common with other Members of the House, received a printed complaint from the purchaser?

MR. HALDANE: I have received an immense mass of printed matter about the Licensing Bill, but none from this purchaser.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Has the purchaser definitely asked to be relieved of his bargain?

MR. HALDANE: Not that I am aware of.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): If he does ask what will the right hon. Gentleman do?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical Question.

Army (Annual) Bill.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) asked the Secretary of State for War whether, as copies of the Army Annual Bill, which was down for Second Reading that evening, had not been distributed, he would postpone the measure so as to allow Members the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with its proposals.

MR. HALDANE said that no one regretted more than he did that, owing to the delay at the printers, there were not more copies at the Vote Office, but he sent to hon. Members interested a copy last week. Copies of the Bill were now available in the Vote Office. He hoped the House would consent to the Second Reading of the Bill that evening, as it contained no new principle, and its proposals could be discussed in Committee, which would be set down for the morning sitting on Wednesday. With the exception of three drafting Amendments, the Bill was identically the same as that of last year.

Martial Law in Natal.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any armed resistance to the ordinary Law is apprehended in Natal if the proclamation of martial law were now withdrawn; and, if not, why the Governor does not now withdraw the proclamation and terminate the suspension of civil rights.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I am afraid that I cannot add anything to my reply given on the 4th of March, namely, that the

Secretary of State is advised that in a self governing colony martial law can only be proclaimed or revoked on the advice of Ministers.

Wages in the Transvaal

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what were the amounts of wages paid to white, native, and Chinese labour respectively, for the years 1905 and 1907.

MR. CHURCHILL: The wages paid on gold mines in the Transvaal for the years ending 30th June, 1905, and 30th June, 1907, those being the periods covered by the Transvaal Government mining engineers reports, are as follows:—Year ending 30th June, 1905: to whites, £4,465,000, or adding salaries £5,273,000; to coloured, £2,527,000; to Chinese £345,000. Year ending 30th June, 1907: to whites, £5,407,000, or adding salaries £6,356,000; to coloured, £2,906,000; to Chinese, £1,217,000.

Imports of Mine Stores in South Africa.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the value of stores for the mines imported during the years 1905 and 1907, respectfully.

MR. CHURCHILL: For the year ended 30th June, 1905, the period covered by the report of the Government mining engineer, the total value of stores consumed by the mines and the mining concerns in the Transvaal was £7,375,000; for the year ended 30th June, 1907, £8,447,000. I cannot say how much of these totals was imported.

Abandoned Mining Claims in the Transvaal.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what were the number of mining claims abandoned in the Transvaal during the years 1906 and 1907, respectively.

MR. CHURCHILL: I regret that the information in the Colonial Office does not enable me to answer the Question.

Transvaal Railway Revenue.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the railway revenue of the Transvaal for the years 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907, respectively.

MR. CHURCHILL: The financial returns of the Inter-Colonial Council do not show Transvaal railway revenues separately. The total nett receipts of the Central South African Railways were: 1903–4, £1,617,000; 1904–5, £1,760,000; 1905–6, £914,000; 1906–7, £551,000. The figure given for 1906–7 is approximate, and in comparing that year and 1905–6 with previous years, allowance must be made for the fact that by a change in book-keeping expenditure, amounting to rather more than £700,000, being interest and sinking fund on that portion of the Guaranteed Loan of £35,000,000, which was devoted to distinctively railway services, was taken into account as a railway liability before the figure for nett receipts was arrived at.

Transvaal Revenue.

SIR GILBERT PARKER I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the revenue of the Transvaal for the years 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907 respectively.

MR. CHURCHILL: The ordinary revenue of the Transvaal was as follows. The financial year is from June to June:—1903–4, £4,423,000; 1904–5, £4,387,000; 1905–6, £4,587,000; 1906–7, £4,371,000.

The Arrest of Mr. Luxenburg, at Odessa.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the arrest and detention in Odessa of Mr. Luxenburg, a British merchant; and whether His Majesty's Government is taking any action in the matter.

The following Questions on the same subject also appeared on the Paper:

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information with regard to the position of Mr. Luxenburg, who is reported to have been imprisoned at Odessa without trial; whether Mr. Luxenburg is a British subject; and, if so, what steps are being taken to secure that he shall receive either trial or release.

MR. FLETCHER (Hampstead): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps have been or are being taken to learn the offence charged against Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg, a naturalised British subject, who has been arrested under orders given by the Russian Government at St. Petersburg to their representatives at Odessa, and cast into prison; and whether the Russian Government have given to our Government satisfactory information justifying Mr. Luxenburg's detention.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg, a British subject, who was arrested at Odessa on a charge of carrying seditious and criminal literature, has been released; what explanation, if any, has been received from the Russian authorities; and if he will press for compensation being paid to Mr. Luxenburg.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The attention of my right hon. friend was called to the case of Mr. Luxenburg, a naturalised British subject of German origin, born at Warsaw, and His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg was instructed to make representations to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject. It would appear that Mr. Luxenburg was arrested by order of the competent authorities, by virtue of the provisions of the law on the state of siege actually in vigour at Odessa, on the charge of revolutionary propaganda in Russia. It appears that his sister is a well-known revolutionary. A special inquiry was opened, and Sir A. Nicolson now reports that Mr. Luxenburg has been released. No further details have as yet been received, and my right hon. friend is unable to make any statement on the question of compensation.

Civil List Pension for Dr. Hall Edwards.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Government can see its way to making some provision for Dr. Hall Edwards, whose sufferings in the cause of science and for the benefit of humanity are known to all.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The hon. Member's suggestion has been anticipated by my right hon. friend, on whose advice the King has been pleased to confer a Civil List pension of £120 upon Dr. Hall Edwards from 1st April last.

Swansea Dock Fatalities.

MR. JOHN WARD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Patrick Long, who was killed by accident on the New King's Dock, Swansea, on Saturday, 7th March; whether this was the third fatal accident on these works within seven days: whether his Department was represented at the inquest; if so, under what Act or Order was the Department authorised to interfere in these cases; and whether the Notice of Accident Act of 1894, which places accidents occurring on docks in course of construction under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trade, has been repealed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have made inquiry as to the case mentioned in the Question. Notice of the accident was sent by the contractors to the factory inspector, and the inspector attended the inquest. The only accidents in connection with the construction of a dock which are reportable to the factory inspector are those which fall under Section 105 of the Act relating to the construction of buildings, and it is not clear from the inspector's report whether the case came strictly within that section; but I understand that the contractors have reported all accidents on these works to the Factory Department. The application of the Notices of Accidents Act of 1894 to docks was repealed by the Factory Act of 1895. I understand that another fatal accident, causing three deaths, occurred on the same works five days before.

MR. JOHN WARD: What section of the Factory Act repeals the Notice of Accidents Acts?

MR. GLADSTONE: The state of the law with regard to the construction of docks is undoubtedly very uncertain, and

I propose to deal with the matter in a small Bill this session.

The Children Bill.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say when the Second Reading of the Children Bill will be taken.

MR. GLADSTONE: To-morrow.

Clapham Junction and Wimbledon Stations.

MR. BOWERMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received petitions from the cab-drivers of Clapham Junction, Battersea, and Wimbledon, praying for the opening of Clapham Junction and Wimbledon stations in accordance with the London Cab and Stage Carriage Act, 1907; if so, whether he can state what reply he has given or intends to give to the petitions; and whether he will put the Act into operation at Beckenham Junction, Blackheath, and East and West Croydon stations.

MR. GLADSTONE: Petitions respecting Clapham Junction and Wimbledon have been received and are under my consideration, but I am not yet in a position to give a definite answer either as regards those stations or the others mentioned by the hon. Member.

Boys for the Mercantile Marine.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of boys returned as gone to sea from industrial and reformatory schools respectively in 1906 and 1907; whether he is able to say how many of these boys were permanently started upon a *bona-fide* seafaring life, and how many were merely sent on small coasting vessels; and, if such information is not to hand, whether he will cause instructions to be given for an annual Return to be made by the reformatory and industrial schools showing the number of boys who have definitely entered either the Royal Navy or the mercantile marine.

MR. GLADSTONE: The number of boys returned as gone to sea in 1906 from industrial schools was 403, the number from reformatory schools, 128. The corresponding Returns for 1907 are not yet completed. In these Returns no distinction is made between the Royal Navy and the mercantile marine, or between coasting and other vessels; but an indication of the degree of permanence of the employment is furnished by the figures on pages 43, 57, and 116, of the Inspector's fiftieth Report. These show that during the three years 1903–1905, 1,878 boys were discharged or licensed to sea, and that at the end of the year 1906, 325 of these boys were serving in the Royal Navy, 934 in the mercantile marine, while 108 were fishermen—a total of 1,367. I will consider the suggestion made in the last sentence of my hon. friend's Question.

Training of Boy Seamen.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention to take steps to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee on the Supply and Training of Boy Seamen for the Mercantile Marine; and whether the matter will come before Parliament in any way.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): The Board of Trade regard with sympathy the proposals made by the Committee with the object of increasing the supply of trained British seamen, and will do their best to give effect to the Committee's recommendations if it is found to be practicable to do so. Parliament will no doubt have an opportunity of considering any action taken by the Government in this matter.

Cheap Trains Act, 1883.

MR. BOWERMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention, during the present session of Parliament, to introduce a Bill to amend the Cheap Trains Act of 1883.

MR. KEARLEY: The question of cheap trains is one on which my right hon. friend is seeking the advice of the Conference that is now considering various matters relating to railways, and he does not think it will be practicable to deal with this particular question separately in the present session.

Danish Bacon and Lard.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the recent prosecution, in Denmark, of Alexander Polsen, manager of the Albion Bacon Curing Factory, Holbeck, Denmark, for malpractices in the curing of tuberculous hogs and for melting down diseased hogs in the lard pan, for which he was fined 1,000 kroner; whether he is aware that the average weekly importations from Denmark, inclusive of the products of this factory, are about 13,000 bales of bacon; and can he state what steps he proposes to take to prevent the introduction into this country of tuberculous bacon and lard from the Albion or any other suspected factory in Denmark.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I understand that the person mentioned in the Question was, after strict investigation by the Danish Minister of Agriculture, fined for melting lard derived from diseased animals, but that the lard was rendered at a temperature which would kill all disease germs. I am informed that he was not found to have committed any malpractices in the curing of tuberculous hogs. Under the law of Denmark bacon exported to this country is prepared from the carcases of pigs inspected at the time of slaughtering by veterinary surgeons approved by the Minister of Agriculture and acting independently of the bacon factories. It does not seem to me that the case referred to makes it necessary that any action should be taken by me for the purpose suggested in the last part of the Question.

The Housing Bill.

MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can yet say when he will introduce the Housing Bill.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I hope to introduce the Bill shortly, but I cannot as yet fix the date.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): Can the right hon. Gentleman say when he will be able to fix the date?

MR. JOHN BURNS: No, Sir.

MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the extreme disappointment at the failure to introduce the Bill last year, and of the great loss, especially in regard to town-planning, involved in the delay?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am thoroughly alive to the expectations of hon. Members. They cannot exceed my own desires, and I will take the earliest possible opportunity of satisfying them.

Altham Church Rate.

SIR JOSEPH LEESE (Lancashire, Accrington): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has had his attention called to the demand note for the payment of church rates in the parish of Altham, Lancashire, in which the rate is described as a rate to defray the incidental expenses of the parish; and whether, seeing that it is calculated to convey to the ratepayers the idea that the rate is enforceable by law when the demand note is signed by the collector of the ordinary rates, and when a form is sent out like the one commonly used for the collection of such rates, he proposes to take any steps in the matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to this matter. I find that a separate notice is issued in respect of the rate referred to, on which it is distinctly stated that the rate is a general voluntary rate. I am informed that the ratepayers are well aware of the voluntary nature of the rate, and that new residents are always told that they can please themselves whether they will pay it or not. The voluntary rate is collected by the assistant overseer on behalf of the churchwardens. I do not think he can be required to cease to collect it, but I understand that if objection is felt to a continuance of the arrangement he is prepared to discontinue it.

Small Holdings.

MR. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if, in case application is made to the Board by a county council for sanction to the borrowing by the council of money for the purchase of land to be let for small holdings, the Board would raise any objection to the borrowing on the ground of its not being shown that the rents from the tenant would cover the charges in respect of the principal of the loan as well as the interest and other current expenses of the county council.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: No, sir.

Motors.

Mr. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Brigg Division of Lincolnshire, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when legislation dealing with motor cars will be introduced.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I am afraid that I cannot give any promise as to the introduction of legislation on this subject during the present session.

Hollesley Bay Colony.

Mr. ALDEN: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will state whether any inquiry has been made into the increased value of Hollesley Bay Colony as a result of the labour expended upon it by the unemployed; and, if not, whether he would cause a valuation to be made at the present time, so that it will be possible to institute a comparison with the cost at the outset of the undertaking.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I understand that valuations were made at Michaelmas, 1906 and 1907, respectively, of the improvements which had been effected at the Farm Colony. I am giving some particulars of the latter valuation in a written answer to a Question by my hon. friend the Member for the Devizes Division, which appears in to-day's Notice Paper.

Unemployed Grant.

Mr. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what substitute will be proposed for the £200,000 towards the unemployed which was voted in the Estimates, 1907–8, but for which no similar provision is made in the Estimates for 1908–9.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. I am not at present in a position to make any statement on this subject. If a further grant is proposed, a Supplemental Estimate will be submitted, as was done last year.

Politics in the Post Office.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, having regard to what has recently passed, he will now either allow all political societies or associations to be formed by members of the service, or else disallow them all.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have recently explained to the House the position I have taken up in the matter.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS: Will the right hon. Gentleman appoint a small Committee to inquire into the whole circumstances and report to this House?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not think so. I see no object in it.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Are we to understand that postal servants are still forbidden to form any branch of the Primrose League?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The hon. Member was in the House when I explained the matter the other day, and I cannot throw any further light on the subject.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON: Are we to understand that the Socialists and Labour Party are to have special facilities which are denied to other organisations?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: No, Sir.

Canadian Magazine Post.

Mr. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the number of British magazines or periodicals which have been sent from the United Kingdom to Canada before and since he instituted the Canadian magazine post a year ago, or give any other figures to show how far it has succeeded.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am glad to say that the Canadian magazine post instituted last May is fully realising the objects for which it was instituted. It has led to a very great increase in the number of British magazines and periodicals sent from the United Kingdom to Canada. It is estimated that the number of British publications sent to the Dominion each week is now 170,000, which is at the rate of nearly 9,000,000 per annum. Of this number it is estimated that 115,000 per week equivalent to nearly 6,000,000 per annum represent the addition to the number due to the magazine post. The number of packets sent by the new post has shown a steady and continuous increase, and I am moreover informed, on good authority, that the increase has been greatest in the case of magazines of high class. This is I think not the least satisfactory feature of the new post.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: What is the pecuniary loss to the taxpayer?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Very slight.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): What has been the cost of subsidising this industry?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Perhaps the hon. member will defer his Question until the post has been in operation for a complete year.

Women Sorters.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if the interpretation allowing time off in lieu of overtime pay as recommended by the Select Committee and adopted by himself in the Post Office Circular recently issued, has been refused to the women sorters in the Circulation Office; and, if so, on whose authority.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There must be some misunderstanding in regard to the question of my hon. friend. There are no women sorters employed in the Circulation Office. As regards the question of time off in lieu of overtime pay, the announcement to the staff states that no officer is compelled to take "time off" in lieu of overtime. I am not aware that any officer has been compelled to take "time off" in lieu of overtime since the issue of the Post Office Circular of 14th February, 1908.

MR. WARDLE: If I furnish the right hon. Gentleman with particulars will he inquire?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Certainly.

Night Duty Rates in the Post Office.

MR. DU CROS (Hastings): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General upon what date the revised hours of night duty, outlined in Paragraph 31 of the Select Committee's recommendations, will come into operation; and whether the time worked by the staff from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. since 1st January last will be regarded and paid for as overtime.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The duties affected will be adjusted at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile overtime rates will be paid as from 1st January last.

Bethnal Green Postmen's Grievance.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that three postmen at Bethnal Green were recently taken into a room and searched, their pockets being turned out, tobacco boxes opened, etc., and that although the overseer responsible for this denies that he locked the men in, all three positively assert that he did so; whether he is aware that the real culprit was subsequently arrested, and that when the men asked that an official statement of regret should be recorded so that no suspicion should rest upon them, they were informed, in the Postmaster-General's name, that the search was made by their own consent, that they had nothing to complain of, and that they must be careful about putting forward such complaints again; will he say whether he sanctioned these innocent men being treated in this fashion; and whether, in view of the statement that they were searched by their own consent, and of their difficulty in refusing to be searched without suspicion being cast upon them or being punished, he will state whether he proposes to take steps to prevent a recurrence of such action.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: In the course of an investigation into certain thefts from the post, a man who was suspected, and who has since been prosecuted and convicted, made statements indicating that he was likely to endeavour to divert suspicion from himself to certain postmen.

It was thought desirable, in the interests of these postmen themselves, to give them at once an opportunity of showing that the stolen property was not in their possession. They were therefore asked whether they were willing to produce the contents of their pockets, and they were clearly informed at the same time that they were not suspected of dishonesty. They made no objection whatever at the time, and when they submitted a memorial to me later, I saw no reason to doubt that the action taken was proper in itself, and entirely in their own interest. No suspicion of dishonesty whatever rests on these men.

MR. CURRAN: What would have happened had these men refused to submit to the search ?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Nothing whatever.

Work in the Royal Parks for the Unemployed.

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works upon what object it is proposed to spend the £2,000 allotted for the unemployed in Class 1 of the Estimates (Royal Parks and Gardens).

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): During the last three winters I have afforded a certain amount of work in the London and country parks for the unemployed. The Central Unemployed Committees have supplied the men and the wages. The Office of Works has supplied the supervision, material, and cartage. I thought it right that in future these expenses should be definitely voted by Parliament. I shall be prepared to explain the matter further on the Estimates, which I hope to take before Easter.

The Ladies' Gallery.

MR. RAPHAEL (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can suggest an arrangement under which ladies desirous of listening to debates in this House can do so in greater comfort than at present; and whether, as a first step, he will recommend to the House the removal of the grille in the Ladies' Gallery, which impedes sound and sight, and is detrimental to proper ventilation.

MR. HARCOURT: I have endeavoured to make such improvements as are possible in the comfort and ventilation of the Ladies' Gallery. I understand that the majority of ladies who use the Gallery do not object to the grille. Sight and sound are interrupted and intercepted by the stone mullions, and I have considered the removal of these, but I find that they are so essential a part of the structure of the House that it is impossible to interfere with or remove them.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): Will the right hon. Gentleman inform us how he has arrived at the opinion of the majority of the ladies ?

MR. HARCOURT: The hon. Member extracts the embarrassing confession from me that I have consulted them personally.

Royston Head Teachership.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether Mr. O. B. Milnes, whose appointment as head teacher to the Royston school was refused last year by the West Riding local education authority on educational grounds, has now been appointed to the Bowers Allerton school at a higher salary by the same local authority; whether the educational grounds still exist; and what is the reason for this apparent change of opinion.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The hon. Member's information is quite correct. As the local education authority confirmed the appointment no occasion for an appeal to the Board arose and the matter has not come before them.

Teachers' Superannuation.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state how many of the 1,259 men and women teachers who are receiving disablement allowance and superannuation allowance at the end of 1907 were head teachers, and how many assistant teachers, at the time they ceased work and took advantage of the Act of 1898.

MR. McKENNA: I should be obliged if my hon. friend would postpone this Question.

Swansea Education Dispute.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): On behalf of the hon. Member for East Marylebone, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether any reply has been received to the letter sent by the Board of Education six weeks ago to the Swansea local education authority on the subject of teachers' salaries.

MR. McKENNA: Yes, Sir; I have received a reply from the local education authority, in which, amongst other points, they contest the jurisdiction of the Board to decide the question at issue under Section 7 of the Act of 1902.

MR. CARLILE: Have the Board of Education come to any decision on the point?

MR. McKENNA: The Board has submitted the question to its legal advisers, and I am awaiting their opinion.

Foot and Mouth Disease Regulations.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that the local authorities of Cumberland and Carlisle have adopted regulations prohibiting the movement into their territory of all kinds of cattle from any part of Scotland; and that they offer to exempt the counties of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Wigtown, and Roxburgh, on condition that the local authorities of these counties exclude stock from all other parts of Scotland; and whether the Board of Agriculture have sanctioned this treatment of Scotland.

SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): At the same time may I ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that the local authorities of Cumberland and Carlisle have adopted regulations prohibiting the movement of horned cattle from the county of Roxburgh, and that they offer to exempt cattle from that county and the counties of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown, on condition that the local authorities of these counties keep out stock from other parts of Scotland; and whether the Board of Agriculture have sanctioned this treatment of Scotland.

*MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): The reply to the first and second part of the Questions is in the affirmative. The regulations to which my hon. friends refer were made by the local authorities concerned and do not require the sanction of the Board.

MR. GULLAND: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Dumfriesshire County Council has refused to cut itself off from the rest of Scotland, and of the great inconvenience and loss which is being occasioned in Scotland by this unusual prohibition? Will he use the influence of the Board with the local authorities to get it removed?

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Will he also use his influence in view of the fact that tuberculous cattle are being sold in public?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: The sale of tuberculous cattle has nothing to do with the foot and mouth disease regulations. In reply to the supplementary Question of the hon. Member for Dumfries Burghs, I may say the Board are fully possessed of the whole circumstances. They do not see their way at present to interfere, but should the regulation remain in operation for too long a period, no doubt they would make representations to the authorities concerned.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.): Is it the intention of the Government now to reconsider some of the provisions of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: The provisions of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill appear to be quite irrelevant to the regulations recently issued by local authorities in Cumberland and Carlisle relating to foot and mouth disease.

Criminal Appeals—Fees for Shorthand Writers.

MR. J. W. WILSON (Worcestershire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the

Treasury what steps have been taken by the Treasury, or otherwise within the knowledge of the Department, to arrange for the appointment of shorthand writers for the service of the courts under the provisions of Section 16 of the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907; what terms have been proposed; and whether those terms are in accordance with the hitherto recognised scale of remuneration for duly qualified and professionally responsible service of that nature.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The appointment of shorthand writers for the purpose of the Criminal Appeal Act does not rest with the Treasury. I understand that the Home Office has addressed a circular to recorders and chairmen of quarter sessions on the subject. The terms of payment fixed by the Treasury are a guinea for each day's necessary attendance with 8d. per folio for transcripts, this payment to cover the supply of a copy of the transcript also when required by the officer for whom the transcript is ordered. For any further copies of transcript supplied either for public use or for parties interested 1½d. a folio will be payable. The rates do not differ materially from those which the Treasury has hitherto paid when it has been necessary to employ a shorthand writer in legal cases.

MR. J. W. WILSON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will take steps to secure that before the proposed terms for shorthand writing under Section 16 of the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, are further suggested to local shorthand writers, a reply is made to the representations submitted to the Treasury upon the subject in January by the council of the Institute of Journalists, on behalf of qualified shorthand writers, being journalists, in all parts of the country; and whether he can give any information as to when the Rules of Court framed under the Act will be laid before the House.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The representations which were submitted to the Treasury by the Institute of Journalists were duly considered before the terms of payment for shorthand writing under the Criminal Appeal Act were fixed, but the communication did not appear to the Treasury to call for any reply beyond the usual acknowledgment of receipt. I understand that the Rules of Court under the Act were laid before Parliament on Wednesday last, and will be available for Members shortly.

Dormant Funds.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in order to increase the usefulness of the list of dormant funds in Court, prepared annually by the Paymaster-General, under the direction of the Treasury, and published as a supplement to the *London Gazette*, he will consider the desirability of adding to the information given with regard to each account published in the list a statement of the principal money standing to the credit of the account.

MR. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir; I do not consider the course proposed by my hon. friend desirable. Perhaps he is not aware that *bona fide* inquirers can obtain information on any particular case on application.

The Old War Office.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works how much of the old War Office in Pall Mall has been disposed of; whether by lease or otherwise; what the old rentals were; and what will be the annual receipts under the new arrangement.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The parts of the old War Office which were given up (namely, Nos. 83 to 91, Pall Mall) were held at occupation rents amounting to £12,036 6s. 8d. per annum. Nearly one-third, viz, Nos. 83, 84, 85 and part of 86, are at present reserved for temporary offices for the Department of the Commissioners of Woods, or for preserving light thereto. An agreement has now been entered into for letting the remainder on a building lease at an ultimate rent of £7,500 per annum, the lessees to erect buildings to cost not less than £100,000.

Glasnakille Crofters.

SIR J. DEWAR (Inverness): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the crofters at Elgoll, in Skye, applied to the Crofters Commission six years ago for the neighbouring grazing of

Glasnakille as an extension to their holdings; that this application has not yet been disposed of; and will he inquire as to the reason of this delay; and press for a decision on the subject.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): An application by crofters of Elgoll for enlargement of their holdings, by taking the farm of Glasnakille, was heard by the Crofters Commissioners in May, 1903, and the subjects inspected. Immediately thereafter Mr. Thomson, the proprietor, offered to sell to the Congested Districts Board the crofting township of Elgoll, and the adjoining farm of Glasnakille, so that the Board might deal with the whole subjects, either by migrating crofters and cottars from Elgoll to Glasnakille or by assigning the lands applied for in enlargement of holdings. The Crofters Commission thereupon waited to hear the result of this proposal, and as they did not hear that it was abandoned till November, 1905, they thought that further local inquiry would be needed before disposing of the application, but have not yet been able to hold such inquiry.

Licensing Bill.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if it is proposed to extend the Licensing Bill to Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: No, Sir.

MR. STANLEY WILSON: Why does not the right hon. Gentleman intend to extend the benefits of this just Bill to Scotland?

[No Answer was returned.]

Royal Scottish Museum.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has considered the Report of the Director of the Royal Scottish Museum, calling attention to the serious danger of fire to the museum involved in the proximity of tenements, the windows of which are within eleven feet of the windows of the museum, and which are occupied as warehouses, one being used as a painter's warehouse, and another as a warehouse for bonded whisky; whether application has been made to the Treasury and His Majesty's Office of Works for such extension of the vacant space round the museum as may guard against this imminent danger, and for such addition to the premises as may afford adequate space for the collections contained in this, the only Scottish museum assisted by Imperial funds; and, if so, what has been the result of such application.

MR. SINCLAIR: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. Representations have been made on the subject to the Treasury and the First Commissioner of Works, and I am now in consultation with those Departments.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: Has not the necessity for an increase in the buildings as well as the danger of fire been under the consideration of the Department, and is not the Office of Works entirely in accord with the Report?

MR. SINCLAIR: I have no reason to think that the facts are otherwise than as stated.

Barra Disturbances.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received any information with regard to a fresh outbreak of disturbances in Barra; whether attempts have been made to take forcible possession of parts of the farm of Toligarry, the property of Messrs. MacGillivray; and what steps he is taking to preserve peace.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have made inquiries, and learn that there is no foundation in fact for the alleged forcible seizure of part of Toligarry. On 4th March in reply to a communication addressed to the Congested Districts Board I sent a letter to a crofter in the district warning those who might contemplate such proceedings to desist from any operations of the character described in the Question.

Tobacco Growing in Scotland.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury under what Statute would the Treasury derive authority to issue permits for the growth of tobacco in Scotland; how much land might any individual cultivate with tobacco under such a permit; would the permit authorise the selling of the produce; and what amount of excise duty would be chargeable.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The authority would be that of Section 1 of the Tobacco Growing (Scotland) Bill now before the House. Until that Bill becomes law it is impossible to deal with the remaining questions, which would fall to be dealt with under the regulations to be drawn by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

MR. COCHRANE: Are there no regulations sanctioned under this Bill?

MR. RUNCIMAN: The regulations will be issued under the Bill now before Parliament, and that cannot be done until the Bill has been passed into law.

MR. COCHRANE: Under what Statute is it proposed to give this permission?

MR. RUNCIMAN: That is not the Question on the Paper, neither do I think this is an occasion on which we can debate what took place upstairs.

MR. COCHRANE: The Question is perfectly clear. Under what Statute do the Treasury derive authority to issue these permits in Scotland?

MR. RUNCIMAN: We shall issue the regulations under the Bill now before the House when it has become an Act of Parliament.

MR. COCHRANE: Then can you give any legal sanction at the present time?

MR. RUNCIMAN: If the hon. Member will put the Question on the Paper I will answer it.

The Glenahiery Outrage.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Attorney-General for Ireland if he will say upon what dates respectively did District-Inspector Preston and the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary become aware, in connection with the Glenahiery outrage, of the purchase on the 23rd July, 1907, of sixty pounds of blasting powder and sixteen feet of fuse in the shop of Mr. Kelly, of Waterford.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): District-Inspector Preston became aware of this purchase upon some date which he cannot precisely fix, but he thinks it was upon the 16th September, 1907. The Inspector-General was not aware of it until the 3rd October.

Royal Scottish Museum.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been called to the statement of Dr. J. J. Dobbie, Director of the Royal Scottish Museum, in his Report for 1907, that the museum is placed in grave danger owing to the proximity of warehouses stored with inflammable materials; and whether he proposes to take any action to remove this danger, which is stated by the director still to exist in spite of the provision of iron shutters.

MR. HARCOURT: The reply to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. There is always a certain amount of danger to all museums by reason of the proximity of other buildings. I am consulting the Secretary for Scotland on the subject.

Small Holdings in Stirlingshire.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that ten heads of families applied to the Stirlingshire county council in July 1907 for fifty acres of Crown land in the immediate neighbourhood of the town for small holdings on co-operative principles; that the county council and the town council favoured the application; that Mr. Stafford Howard, the Commissioner of Woods and Forests, after visiting the place in September, approved of the grant of the land; that the objection of certain persons that the proposed small holdings would intercept the view from the Castle was over-ruled as absurd by the county council; and that on the report of Sir Schomberg Macdonnell the Secretary for Scotland refused the application, notwithstanding the strong local support given to them; and whether, seeing that the county council, instead of opposing or being indifferent, actively supported this promising commencement under favourable auspices, the

Government will reconsider their decision and grant the land to the applicants.

MR. RUNCIMAN: In consequence of the opposition manifested to the site proposed for these small holdings, and having regard to the views of the Office of Works and all the circumstances of the case, the applicants and the Commissioner of Woods are in communication with a view to finding an alternative site, if possible.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) was understood to ask if the refusal had anything to do with the action of the county council in refusing to accept responsibility.

MR. RUNCIMAN: We had nothing whatever to do with that.

Scariff Labourers' Cottages Scheme.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the Local Government Board in Ireland will declare the result of the inquiry into the labourers' cottages scheme in Scariff district, county Clare.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol N.): The inspector's order embodying the result of the inquiry has been signed and is in the hands of the printer. The Local Government Board will send copies of the order to the rural district council in a day or two.

New Ross Urban District Council and the Treatment of Consumption.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the New Ross Urban District Council passed resolutions to the effect that all cases of pulmonary consumption should be notified, that there should be more stringent and uniform measures for the regulation of milk and food supplies, that county councils should be enabled to erect and maintain hospitals, sanatoria, and dispensaries for the treatment of consumption, and that there should be a system of medical inspection of schools and school children; and whether he can hold out any hope of legislation in the direction indicated.

MR. BIRRELL: I have received several resolutions on this subject. The Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill, which I am to introduce, will contain a clause providing for the compulsory notification of tuberculosis, and will also deal with the official supervision of dairies and of the sale of food. As to the medical inspection of schools, I would refer to the Answer given to the hon. Member for South Down on 26th February.

Irish Education Grants.

MR. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the disparity between the grants for primary education in Great Britain and Ireland, taking population as a basis of comparison; whether this has been made the subject of frequent protest by the public bodies in Ireland as well as the managers and teachers; and whether the Government will consider Ireland's claims to equal treatment with reference to primary education as compared with the other portions of the three Kingdoms.

MR. BIRRELL: The question raised by the hon. Member cannot be adequately discussed within the limits of an oral answer. I may, however, repeat an announcement recently made by my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury, namely, that it is the intention of the Government to provide a substantial increase in the Vote for Public Education, Ireland, for the coming financial year, with the object of improving the salaries of the teachers.

Letterkenny Labourers' Cottages.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what is the cause of the delay in erecting forty labourers' cottages in the Letterkenny union, East Donegal, under Scheme C., that was agreed to and inquired into by an inspector in February, 1906; whether he can say why the rent charged for the cottages they have built are higher than in any other union in Ireland; and whether he will state what steps he will take, and when, to force the guardians to provide cottages for forty families that are now living in unsanitary hovels and some are without a house of any kind.

MR. BIRRELL: The loan in this case was sanctioned by the Local Government Board in April, 1907, and an instalment of £1,600 was then issued, but the rural district council do not appear to have since made much progress in the matter. The scheme authorises the taking of the sites for the cottages by agreement and not compulsorily, and possibly the council have not yet been able to arrange terms of purchase. The Local Government Board are about to communicate with the council as to the delay. The rents of the cottages already provided, namely, 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. a week, are somewhat in excess of the rents usually charged, but are not higher than in some other unions.

Unoccupied Evicted Holdings in Cork.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the number of unoccupied evicted holdings in Cork county to which the compulsory powers contained in the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907 apply; and in how many cases do the Estates Commissioners hope to effect the reinstatement of the former tenants, during the approaching spring, by the exercise of these powers, or in any other way.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are inquiring into the cases of all approved applicants whose holdings are in the occupation of landlords, with a view to putting in force the compulsory provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act in the cases which come within such provisions. The Commissioners are unable to state the number of cases to which their compulsory powers may be applicable, as this will depend upon the result of the judicial proceedings to be taken in each case. The periodical return under Section 3 of the Act will give, by counties, the number of evicted tenants reinstated.

Irish-Owned Motors.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will say whether an Irish owner of a motor car, registered in Ireland, who brings his car to England for a short period, is liable to be held up by the police, on the ground that he has not paid the fees chargeable in England for armorial bearings and for carriage tax, neither of which taxes are leviable in Ireland.

MR. ASQUITH: The police have no power to "hold up" the owner of a motor car on either ground.

Telegraphic Delays to Belfast.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether there is any reason why two hours should elapse between the despatch of a telegraphic message from London and its delivery in Belfast; whether he has received complaints of such telegraph delay in Belfast: whether these delays are due to the fact that an insufficient staff of expert telegraphists are kept on duty during hours of pressure; and what steps he proposes to take to avoid these vexatious delays in future.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There has recently been unavoidable delay in communication between London and Ireland in consequence of the breakdown of one of the cables. That has been repaired, but I am sorry to say a fault has now developed in another cable.

The Licensing Bill.

MR. GEORGE FABER (York): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in view of the fact that the enactment of a time limit in the Licensing Bill involves an insurance against its termination, it is proposed to levy income-tax both on the profits of licensed property and also upon the sinking fund which may be provided out of such profits as an insurance against the time limit, or whether the income-tax charged and paid on the sinking fund may be deducted from the income-tax charged on the profits.

MR. ASQUITH: The whole of the profits of a business are under the Income-Tax Acts assessable to income-tax, without regard to the fact that a portion of them may be used for the purpose of establishing a sinking fund to replace wasting assets. The special circumstances, however, of the present case shall be given very full consideration, though I am not in a position to pledge myself that it will be found possible to make an exception to the general and long established practice which I have explained.

Apart from the assessment made on the profits of the business as a whole, no charge would be made on any portion of such profits which may be set aside for the purpose of a sinking fund.

MR. SLOAN: When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to take the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill?

MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet in a position to make a statement.

MR. SLOAN: Will it be before Easter?

MR. ASQUITH: Yes; I have already said so.

NEW BILLS.

BOROUGH COUNCILS BILL.

"To amend The Municipal Corporation Acts, 1882, with respect to the number of Councillors," presented by Mr. Whitehead; supported by Sir William Bull, Mr. Soares, Mr. Buckmaster, Mr. Bertram Straus, and Mr. Mallet; to be read a second time upon Friday, 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 168.]

PUBLIC HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To exclude Children and Young Persons from the bars of Public-houses and other licenced premises in Scotland," presented by Mr. Gulland; supported by Mr. Findlay, Mr. M'Callum, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Eugene Wason, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Leif Jones, Mr. Dundas White, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. M'Kinnon Wood, Mr. Charles Roberts, and Mr. Charles Price; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 169.]

EMPLOYMENT OF BRITISH SUBJECTS ABROAD BILL.

"To prohibit the engagement of British subjects for service in the place of workmen locked out in a strike in a Foreign Country," presented by Mr. Crooks; supported by Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Curran, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Joseph Wilson, Mr. Brace, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. John Ward, Mr. Fenwick, and Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda); to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 170.]

WEEKLY REST-DAY BILL.

"To secure a Weekly Rest-Day," presented by Mr. Charles Price; supported by Mr. Steadman, Mr. Bertram Straus, Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Ferens, and Mr. Gulland; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 2nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 171.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I have a very grave matter to bring before the House, and I ask particularly for the attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite, because, unless I am grievously mistaken about this matter, that which I am about to bring before the House concerns the self-respect of hon. Gentlemen opposite more than it does anyone on this side. The House will remember that last session, on the question of the sincerity of the Government with regard to indentured labour, it was my duty to bring before the House the fact that their practice did not very well conform with their professions on this subject, by bringing to the attention of the House a Convention to which I will not make more than a passing reference, but which did, as a matter of fact, meet with the condemnation of both sides of the House. That Convention contained clauses which were repulsive to the House, clauses admitting the indenture of women and children for no minimum wage, with very long hours of labour, and also a repatriation clause indistinguishable from the Chinese Repatriation Ordinance. We will not labour that matter, however. [MINISTERIAL Ironical cheers.] I quite understand that hon. Gentlemen opposite are a little restive. I think, at any rate, this Convention is closely relevant to what I am bringing before the House now. Comment sufficiently vigorous to arouse the attention of the Government was made on that occasion, and it cannot be said now that if they have dealt with indentured labour in any other part of the Empire they have done it heedlessly or without deliberation. Well, what has happened? This year, in the Transvaal, in the very seat of the controversy which has raged for some four years about Chinese labour, an event has occurred which I think will surprise the House. Let me deliberately formulate the charge which I bring against His Majesty's Government. I say that the Government have deliberately, behind the back of Parliament, and in breach of their pledges to Parliament, sanctioned the revival for a substantial period of that Chinese indentured labour in the Transvaal mines which for four years and from 10,000 platforms they have held up to execration and scorn. That is a very serious charge to make. I trust I should be the last man to make it unless I had beneath my hand documentary evidence to support it. I say again that I invite the attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite. This is not a question which involves our sincerity, because of course we were, and have always admitted it, full partners to the Ordinance of 1904 establishing Chinese labour. It is not our self-respect which is concerned; we should have done the same thing as the Government have done, only for a longer period. It is the sincerity and self-respect of the Party opposite that is at stake, because they have used language about the conditions of Chinese labour which was absolutely inconsistent with the action of their Government in sanctioning the continuance of those conditions. What was the policy of the late Unionist Government in regard to this Ordinance? In 1903 we were faced by the fact that a grave financial crisis was inevitable in the Transvaal unless we sanctioned the employment of the Chinese in the mines. Accordingly we sanctioned the employment of the Chinese, as an experiment, to meet the shortage of labour which then existed, and we most distinctly said that that Chinese labour was to be supplementary to, and not in substitution of, Kaffir labour. What was the position of the Liberal Party in regard to that policy? In the pre-election period, I mean before the election of 1906, we know what the language of hon. Gentlemen opposite and their leaders was with regard to that policy. I know the House would be wearied, and I hope it would be disgusted, if I were to repeat that language. It will be sufficient to say that their denunciation of the policy was absolutely unmeasured. But what happened in the post-election period; what happened after this election, which had largely been fought upon this question? The present Government found themselves compelled to deal with the matter early in their career. A note had been sounded which was not acceptable to the stalwarts below the gangway, and was struck by the Under-Secretary in the debate on the Address. His task, I admit, was extremely difficult; for in the politest terms he could command he had to show his dissent from the denunciation of the Ordinance by his own Party as slavery. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "A labour contract into which men entered voluntarily for a limited and brief period, under which they were paid wages that they considered adequate, under which they were not bought or sold, and from which they could obtain relief, may not be a desirable contract, may not be a proper or a healthy contract, but it could not in the opinion of His Majesty's Government be classified——"

then the right hon. Gentleman used terms the repetition of which again would bore the House, but he intimated in gigantic words that those who said such a contract was slavery were not wholly truthful. I appreciate the difficulty the right hon. Gentleman was in, and I do not wish to say that he dealt with it in other than an extremely able way; but later on in that speech he said—

> "It has been said that our policy is to leave the decision of this question to the Transvaal Legislature. Broadly speaking, that is true——"

And then he gave certain qualifications which were forgotten afterwards, and the impression on this House at the time was, and I think it was intended to be by the right hon. Gentleman, that although he could not justify statements that had been made on previous occasions by his own Party about Chinese labour being slavery, in his judgment the policy of Chinese labour should be left to the self-governing community in the Transvaal. Neither that declaration of the policy of the Government nor that description of the speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite was popular on the other side of the House. I am not aware whether the gentlemen who called Chinese labour slavery, and were told they were not truthful, were more indignant than those who really thought it was slavery, and then saw it passed over by a British Government to a self-governing community to say whether or not they would have it. Unless I have greatly mistaken the feeling of the House, I believe that if that statement of the right hon. Gentleman had been left unqualified and uncontradicted by some higher authority the Government would have lost the division even upon the Address in the plenitude and heyday of their prosperity. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not for the first time nor for the last, came to their rescue. He saw the situation and his Party saw the situation, and he conveyed a different impression from that which had been conveyed by the Under-Secretary. He came down next day and took up this definite position on behalf of the Government. He said that for a time the Chinese experiment must continue, but as soon as the Transvaal as a self-governing community had had a reasonable time to look round, then this Ordinance and the regulations and everything that had arisen out of it would come to an end. The Transvaal Parliament would then itself be free, unembarrassed, and unhampered by the Ordinance which at present oppressed them, and they would have an opportunity, if they wished Chinese labour to continue, to submit their scheme and the regulations and conditions under it. If those conditions in any way corresponded to the Ordinance, if they were in any way repugnant to the best British traditions, His Majesty's Government would veto them. What I am bringing before the House this afternoon depends so largely upon this declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and on this pledge given in Parliament to his followers definitely and seriously—this declaration and this pledge are so serious that I think I ought to read them to the House, though I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer accepts in substance what I have said. [Mr. ASQUITH assented.] The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "This is a matter in which the credit and responsibility of the Imperial Parliament are concerned."

Speaking of their liberty to determine the future of Chinese labour he said—

> "They will be required if they so determine, to frame legislation of their own as to the conditions under which such labour should be carried on. That legislation will, not only by the inherent power vested in the Crown in the case of colonial Constitutions, but by express instructions given to the Government, be reserved for the consideration of His Majesty's Government at home. Let me add that, though I do not anticipate any such contingency arising, if such a contingency did arise, so long as we on this Bench are responsible for the conduct of affairs, any legislation corresponding to that of this Ordinance and inconsistent with our best British traditions would unquestionably be vetoed by the Government on behalf of the Crown."

That speech, though I daresay it did not appeal to those to whom the speech of the Under-Secretary appealed, did appeal to those who had honest doubts in this matter. The machinery was left open by the right hon. Gentleman—the machinery was not plainly indicated then, but he said it would be indicated thereafter. Five months passed from the date of that speech, and it became the task of the Under-Secretary to bring forward a Constitution for the Transvaal setting up a Transvaal Government and enacting the machinery by which the pledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be fulfilled. I do not think I need do more than quote one passage of that speech of the Under-Secretary, but, perhaps, I had better first refer to the provisions of the Constitution by which this pledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, I quite admit, redeemed and recorded. It is found in Section 50, Subsections 2 and 3, and the substance of them is this, that on the termination of a period of one year from the date of the first meeting of the free self-governing Parliament of the Transvaal, the Ordinance entitled Labour Importation Ordinance made in 1904—that is the Ordinance of the last Government—shall be repealed and cease to have effect within the Colony, and that system of labour shall accordingly be determined. That absolutely fulfils the pledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, although many thought that the "reasonable time" within which it was to be repealed was a long time, though I will not quarrel with that. The Under-Secretary in explaining the new Constitution said that—

> "No law would be assented to which sanctioned any condition of service or residence of a servile character."

[AN HON MEMBER: Date.] The date of that is 1st August, 1906. Let me just give a *resume* of the position. Under the pledges of the Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer we were to get a machinery which was supplied by the Act of Constitution that; machinery was entirely apt and proper for the purpose, and nothing could have been recorded with greater solemnity and more formality than the provisions of the Constitution under which the late Government's Ordinance should come to an end on, I think the exact day would have been last Saturday. The Transvaal Government would then have a perfectly clean sheet upon which they could write any conditions for the regulation of Chinese labour they pleased, and not by one but by two or three declarations the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman were assured that if there was any taint of slavery whatever in the new conditions regulating Chinese labour His Majesty's Government would courageously veto them. But hon. Gentlemen opposite will really be astonished I think when they hear what the Government consider to be a redemption of those pledges. Will it be believed that last August, within, I think, two days of the rising of the House, on 27th August, there was promulgated in a publication which I am bound to say is not an attractive one or widely read in this country—in the Government Gazette Extraordinary of the Transvaal—without any debate in the Transvaal about it, as the Attorney-General simply mentioned it, a statement that there was re-enacted for more than two years every single line of the late Government's Ordinance, every single line of the regulations under it; and by Proclamation on 30th December last, His Majesty was made to say that it was His Majesty's pleasure—not to veto as the right hon. Gentleman had said—but not to disallow the re-enactment, that is, in other words, to sanction it? When I said that not a line of the Ordinance was altered I ought to mention, in order to prevent misunderstanding, that there were certain emergency provisions brought forward in the interests of the public safety in the mines in 1905, at a time when there had been some rioting. The provisions related to deductions and fines and to collective punishment, and I think summary trial on the mining premises instead of in the Courts. I think His Majesty's Government were right in saying on their responsibility some months before the right hon. Gentleman's speech that there was no necessity for the further continuance of those provisions as the emergency had disappeared, and I think they were right in repealing them.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): What was the emergency?

MR. LYTTELTON: The emergency was the occurrence of riots for which, on the advice of the Superintendent of Labour, the special measures were framed. I see the right hon. Gentleman sneers at the idea of this being treated as unimportant. Does he really say that it is important? Does he really maintain that the Ordinance of the late Government is substantially affected by these emergency provisions? He cannot; and no man can, as I can prove; and the less the right hon. Gentleman sneers at that the better. If there had been any truth in what those now sitting on the Treasury Bench said about the Ordinance, it should not have been allowed to remain on the Statute-book for a single month. In 1904 the President of the Local Government Board said—

> "This Ordinance was like a bill of lading for billets or railway sleepers. The negro slave in America was never treated as these Chinese were to be treated. He was not made to live in a compound, part prison and part hospital, while a company made heavy profits out of him by selling him rotten meal and diseased mealies, and by subjecting him to loathsome conditions."

The Chief Secretary said that these labour conditions—

> "Were objectionable to the English Government and the English people, and they could not, and would not, be approved of in time to come under any circumstances whatever."

Then what did the Chancellor of the Duchy say, speaking in 1904? The right. hon. Gentleman said that the question for the House was whether they would sanction the introduction of slavery into one part of the King's dominions, and he went on to say that the British Parliament was not entitled to allow, and would have no moral justification for allowing, any Colony which called itself British to introduce such a system into its midst. The Secretary to the Local Government Board has made quite a reputation on this subject; I believe he has repeated these matters in Peckham lately. I wonder if he knew what the Government had been doing. He said in 1906 that, not as a mere elector, but as a Britisher, he would be a very unhappy man if six months hence there were very considerable numbers of Chinese on the Rand. That unfortunate gentleman has now the prospect of enjoying another two years of misery on the responsibility not of the late Government, but of those who now occupy the Treasury Bench, who pledged themselves in 1906 that the moment the Ordinance came to an end they would veto anything which had the least taint of slavery. The hon. Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool, on the authority of Lord Mansfield, set forth conditions which he said constituted badges of slavery. Have they been removed? They are all there now.

Colonel SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): Of course they are there, in order to control the people that the right hon. Gentleman brought there.

Mr. LYTTELTON: It is a pity that that had not been thought of before, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer distinctly stated that after a reasonable time—eighteen months—they would be vetoed if they reappeared. We have heard that the hon. and gallant Gentleman is soon to sit on the Treasury Bench. With what face can he do so when those four conditions betokening slavery which he has repeated *ad nauseam* are actually re-enacted by his own friends on their own responsibility. Assuming that Ministers when they made these statements believed them to be true, do they not know now that they were false? They surely must. If they were true, then it is impossible, judged by any standard of self-respect, that Ministers can sit on the Treasury Bench and admit that they were parties to re-enacting them contrary to the pledges they had given. It cannot be contended that there is any pressing economic necessity now, for we are told that the natives are tumbling over each other in their ardour to go into the mines. If these statements are false, then in common honesty Ministers are bound to recant the words by which the country was deceived, and make, however tardily, some reparation for having used them. It should not be difficult, because they have attested the baselessness of these charges by their own action. On former occasions, when the Under-Secretary for the Colonies found himself in difficulties argumentatively on this question, he roused the clamour of his supporters by unmixed vituperation of the Chinese Ordinance and of those responsible for it. To repeat that process now would be simply to magnify and to emphasise the wrong which the Government has committed; the blacker the colours in which the right hon. Gentleman painted the Ordinance of the late Government the deeper the guilt of Ministers who against their pledges have re-enacted it. But that is not the end. If the pledge given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to be broken, would any Member opposite get up and say that the House and the country should not have been plainly and publicly informed of it?

Mr. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): Would the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether under the terms of this Ordinance we have sanctioned the introduction of any Chinamen not already there?

Mr. LYTTELTON: I do not think that has anything to do with it; the Ordinance re-enacted the Ordinance passed by the late Government; it does not profess to deal with a new immigration. Anybody who likes straight dealing will say that, if a Parliamentary pledge given with great solemnity by a representative of the Government is about to be broken, whether for good cause or bad, Parliament ought to be fully informed both of the fact and of the reasons for breaking the pledge.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): Does the right hon. Gentleman now allege that when we gave our assent to this Ordinance we intended to break a pledge given to this House? [OPPOSITION cries of "You did break it."] That is another point. Does he say that we intended to break our pledge or does he not?

MR. LYTTELTON: I must leave the intentions of the Government to be explained by themselves. I never have stated, and do not intend to state, anything in regard to the intentions of the Government.

MR. ASQUITH: You did so.

MR. LYTTELTON: No. I am well aware of what I am doing. I took the trouble to write down the charge which I made against the Government. I stated that they deliberately, behind the back of Parliament and in breach of considered pledges to it, sanctioned the revival for a substantial period of the very conditions of indentured labour which they had denounced.

MR. ASQUITH: The right hon. Gentleman made the distinct statement a few moments ago that when people intend to break a pledge they should give full notice to the country.

MR. LYTTELTON: The right hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong in the words he quoted. My right hon. friend who is sitting by me tells me that my words cannot properly bear the interpretation put upon them by the right hon. Gentleman. I do not remember them with verbal precision, but I say that the charge against the Government is not one as to intention, but if they deny the intention I can have no difficulty in accepting the denial. What I said was this, and I say it again, that whether they have given a pledge or not, when they inserted in the very foundation law of the Transvaal Constitution a term which brings that Ordinance to an end, and when, before the period of determination arrived, they, without mentioning either in any Blue-book or any speech, so far as I know, or in any single efficient utterance in this country, took the action I have described, they behaved in a manner which this House must and ought to condemn. Contrast the position with regard to the information upon these subjects, with that to which the House was previously accustomed. I make no sort of claim on my own behalf for any credit, but those who have studied this question know perfectly well that throughout the time I was in the Colonial Office every single detail with regard to the experiment of Chinese labour was formulated in Blue-books and was open to the inspection of everyone in this House. Most elaborate details were given, and the practice was continued by my successor; I ought to be well within the mark when I say that a thousand pounds must have been spent in this country on Blue-books issued by the Colonial Office, and by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. Every detail was given, every occasion that a Chinese labourer was fined 2s. for being late at his work, and every single incident which could possibly be regarded as adverse to the experiment. I firmly believe that hon. Gentlemen opposite have every bit as much interest in a full disclosure as we have. But contrast the extraordinary fulness of detail with which this subject was treated when the experiment was difficult and was a subject of great responsibility with what has happened since this Ordinance was passed on the 27th August last. Seven months have passed since the promulgation of this document, and His Majesty issued the proclamation affirming and sanctioning it so far back as the 30th December last. Three months have elapsed and Parliament has met since then. How many Blue-books have been issued? Three or four—two of them, if I am not mistaken, deal with the subject of Asiatic immigration, which is closely associated with the question of Chinese labour.

MR. CHURCHILL: Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that he himself did not know that this Ordinance was in force when Parliament met?

MR. LYTTELTON: No, I did not. I take some blame to myself for not knowing.

MR. CHURCHILL: You ought.

MR. LYTTELTON: I think not, for this reason. Of course, I knew the Ordinance was to come to an end by a provision of the Constitution, in March of this year. That was the date on which my mind was concentrated, and it was not to the interest of anyone in South Africa to apprise me of the terms; and it was obviously not to the interest of the right hon. Gentleman opposite to apprise his followers. I may have missed something in the papers, but I am not aware of it. Can any hon. Member opposite refer me to any official publication in this country by which this was disclosed?

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) said he had referred to the subject, which was discussed for some time, in August last, and was duly reported in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates.*

MR. LYTTELTON: I quite accept what the hon. Member has said. I was not aware of it; but what I say is this, that it was wrong and misleading for no mention to be made in this country in any official document or any Blue-book on this matter. I do not know what period the hon. Gentleman refers to.

*MR. MACKARNESS: The 21st August.

MR. LYTTELTON: I think I shall be stating what is correct with regard to the passing of the law when I say we were utterly unaware that the Ordinance had been passed and accepted. [Cries of "No, no."] I am perfectly open to correction on the point. If I can be satisfied that anything has escaped my notice, well and good. So far as I know, there has been utter official silence since the 27th August until this date. I think the hon. and learned Member who states that he referred to this matter in August is missing the true point. The point is whether the Ordinance passed by the Government of the Transvaal is in actual conflict with that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid down as the principle. [Cries of "No."] Yes. The right hon. Gentleman says not. He must forgive me for saying so, but I wonder he has the audacity to say that, because I am using his own words when I say that he pledged himself to this House to veto any such Ordinance passed by the Transvaal Government as corresponded to our own. This Ordinance is the same. [Cries of "No."] The hon. and learned Gentlemen said he referred to this subject in August. Assent by Royal Proclamation was not given to this Law until the 30th December, and I beg that the hon. and learned Gentleman will not interrupt me unless he can answer my Question. Can he refer me to any declaration since the 30th December last year in which there is any reference to the proclamation.

*MR. MACKARNESS said he himself had taken very much the view of the right hon. Gentleman, and had pointed out to the Government in August last that the course was being taken which the right hon. Gentleman had stated.

MR. LYTTELTON: Fortunately I have an account of the proceedings in my hand. On the 26th August last, the hon. Member for Newbury asked whether the servile conditions expressly prohibited by the terms of the Constitution were to be re-enacted for three years. The Under-Secretary replied that the Ordinance—

> "had not yet come to this country, and he could not forecast what would be the action of the Government of the Transvaal."

Here is an official utterance—

> "But it appeared to him that the Transvaal Government were prepared to terminate rather than touch the details of the system of Chinese labour which prevailed."

I would ask the hon. Member for Newbury whether he thinks that it was brought clearly to the attention of the House, and the friends who sit by him, that they were going to introduce, to use his own felicitous language, servile labour for a period of three years? This appears to have excited some indignation in certain quarters, but not in many, but I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will be glad to hear what are the real facts of the case. I do not think I have misrepresented a single thing. I do not think I have made any comments upon the facts. I think the facts as I have narrated them form the best commentary themselves. But I do ask the Under-Secretary how he can reconcile the facts which I have stated with the rudimentary principles of good faith.

MR. CHURCHILL: Mr. Speaker, the debate on the Question which you have put from the Chair affords wide scope to the ingenuity and activity of an Opposition. There are scarcely any subjects which can be conceived within the ordinary arena of Party politics which cannot in one form or another be raised on such an occasion as this. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, therefore, have had a very wide choice of subjects from which to select the principal ground for attacking his Majesty's Government. I must say I am surprised that, with so many attractive subjects of controversy before him, the right hon. Gentleman should have fallen back upon his old love, disdaining all novelties which might have been introduced into political controversy, to be faithful to that great system of Chinese labour with which his name will for ever be associated.

MR. LYTTELTON: And to which you have been faithful.

MR. CHURCHILL: And on which he has so often addressed the House from so many points of view. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to this old subject, probably well known to everyone who has sat for the last two years in the House of Commons, the issues of which have been threshed out over and over again, with a little less than the usual good temper which characterises his speeches in this House. I do not think I have ever heard the right hon. Gentleman use charges of broken faith and breach of pledges against his political opponents with so much repetition and emphasis as we have listened to this afternoon. This debate has followed a long succession of cross-examinations of a protracted and vigilant character, which we have had at Question time during the last three weeks. I say frankly, speaking on behalf of the Government and the Colonial Office policy, I am not at all sorry that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have at length had the courage to raise this question in the House, where it may properly be made the subject of debate, and of reply. I was surprised that the Opposition should seek to dwell upon the subject of Chinese labour. After all, there has been no subject, I think, on which they have more consistently been wrong, from the day the controversy was begun until this afternoon. I have seen it suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition and by others that we who sit on this side of the House are ashamed of what we have said in regard to Chinese labour. I am not in the least ashamed. I am quite willing to admit that in some of the language used about Chinese labour there was an element of exaggeration. It is a deplorable thing that, when persons are engaged in acute political controversy, they sometimes allow their language to be rather the means of giving relief to their feelings than an actual description of the facts. That is, no doubt, a very melancholy fact for us to reflect upon, but it has gone on in the past in English politics, and it may sometimes recur in the future—I tremble to think that something of this nature may even at this moment be going on in this very city. But, reviewing the whole agitation against Chinese labour now, two years afterwards, when it is passing away for ever from South Africa, I doubt whether you could take from the whole area of politics any subject on which the Liberal Party and those who act with them in this question have been more completely vindicated. Why, it is proved now what could only be prophesised four years ago, when the Chinese were first introduced, that the system was a vicious, unhealthy system, producing lamentable consequences to the Chinese and the greatest disturbance to all the people of the country into which they were brought. It has been proved that under that system, in defiance of pledges given by the right hon. Gentleman to the House of Commons—though I am quite willing to admit without his personal knowledge—flogging on a very extensive scale had been practised on the Chinese by the sanction of the trusted officer of his administration. It is proved that, while the Chinese have been employed upon the Witwatersrand, the industry has deteriorated in almost every respect—in the number of white men employed per drill, per stamp, per ton of ore mined, per ounce of gold extracted, and in the wages which are paid to the native labourers, and in every respect there has been a sensible deterioration in the ordinary economy of the Witwatersrand industry. It has been proved that, so far from the introduction of Chinese labour leading to an increase in the employment of white labour, it has produced a positive reduction in the amount of white labour employed, and even in the proportion of white labour employed. And let the House notice this. It is a coincidence from which we are entitled to draw a moral, that the proportion of white labour employed to natives and Chinamen on the Rand fell to the lowest point at the moment when the maximum of Chinese importation had been attained, and the smallest number of white men on the Rand corresponded exactly with the largest number of Chinamen; and since we have turned the corner of this importation and have begun to wear it down there has been steady increase in the number of white men employed on the Witwatersrand. So that hon. Gentlemen opposite were wrong again on that matter, among all the others. But what am I to say about the will of the people of the Transvaal, of which we heard so much? It used to be represented in the last Parliament that not to allow the Chinese Ordinance would be to coerce a Colony which was virtually self-governed. We were told that the moment the people of the Transvaal had an opportunity of expressing their opinion, so far from letting the Chinamen go, they would insist upon some system by which their importation should be continued, and even increased. We were told that, even after General Botha had become Prime Minister, there would be no attempt on the part of the Transvaal Government to get rid of the Chinese. There sits the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dulwich, who in this House made a speech which, I am sure, every one sitting on the bench beside him deplores, in which he said that—

> "General Botha has been paid for but not bought,"

and that the Chinese would not be repatriated under the Government which had then come into power. Very well. What has been the result? I stand here to admire the noble efforts which the Transvaal Government have made to get rid of Chinese labour. Let the House remember what they had to do. The number of Chinese in the country since we assumed power was increased actually while we, who disapproved of the whole system, held power; but why? Because under the administration of the right hon. Gentleman, in spite of his recommendation to his officers, 16,000 extra licences were issued which it would have been a breach of contract for the in-coming Government to disallow. Against that the Transvaal Government had to work. But, in spite of this upward tide of Chinese they have reduced the number of Chinese from something like 63,000, the figure at which they stood at their maximum, to something under 28,000 at the present moment, and before the end of the year I believe not much more than 10,000 Chinese will be remaining, and a very small and diminishing quantity will peter out completely and for ever when another twelve months after that has passed. So much for the substantial facts of the controversy. Let me follow the right hon. Gentleman into the Parliamentary point which he has made as to the pledges which have been given. We never pretended for a moment that it would be possible to get rid of the Chinese by a stroke of the pen. On the contrary, the House knows perfectly well that I made a speech, the first speech I had the honour of delivering in this House for the Government, in which I indicated to the supporters of the Government on these benches, who were earnestly desirous of seeing Chinese labour terminated at a stroke, that it was physically and practically impossible to determine it so. You had so committed us, you had so compromised this country and the people of the Transvaal against their will, you had so tied our hands for the future by the careful manner in which 16,000 further Chinese were to be admitted, that it was not possible, short of imposing upon the taxpayers of this country a vast and uncalculated expenditure, to terminate the system by a stroke of the pen. I appealed to the House for patience. I appealed to the House to trust to the judgment and opinion of the local Government. I appealed to the House to trust the people of the Transvaal, that when they got the power of dealing with their own affairs they would repudiate the action which was falsely and improperly entered into in their behalf. I was laughed at. We were derided from those benches just as we are to-day, but to-day we have the facts on our side. It is no use for the hon. Member for Dulwich to laugh. His laughter will not make the Chinese come back. It will not prevent them shrinking steadily until the last one has gone away, and will not prevent that beneficial and blessed operation so full of hope and advantage to South Africa and the British Empire as a whole, from being accomplished upon the authority and by the driving power of a Government elected on the widest possible franchise. What did my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer say as to the time in which Chinese labour could be abolished. He said, in the debate on the Address at the beginning of this Parliament—

> "I remember pointing out on that occasion that the worst of taking a step of this kind was that once you had taken it in a large measure and for a long time to come it must be irretraceable. And so I believe there is no one who thinks or has ever encouraged the country to think at the time of the election that these coolies could be compulsorily deported *en masse.*"

He said further—

> "I wonder whether hon. Gentlemen who gave that faint cheer a few moments ago have ever read the history of the dealings of this country and this Parliament with West Indian slavery. That was admitted slavery. There was no question or dispute about it in any quarter. And what happened? When the great reformed Parliament met in 1833, full of enthusiasm after the Act of 1832, the first really popular Assembly that had met within these walls for the best part of a couple of hundred years, one of the first tasks to which it addressed itself was the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies. I suppose you would agree that Mr. Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Buxton were perhaps as keen and as sincere in their abhorrence and in their desire to put an end to it as even the framers of this Amendment. Well, what was the legislation of that Parliament—the carefully considered legislation of men who were as keenly desirous as any man on these benches, that any reproach of this sort should be removed? They enacted that for a period of seven years these slaves released in name at least from the *status* of slavery were to continue as compulsory apprentices to their masters, giving three-fourths of their time and labour to those who had formerly been their owners, so anxious, and rightly anxious, were they that when an institution of this kind, good or bad, had become mixed up with the whole social and industrial life of the community you should not, in your anxiety and legitimate eagerness to put an end to it at the earliest possible moment, inflict unmerited and unnecessary suffering on those who were affected by it."

Is is in conjunction with that statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the whole policy of the Government in this matter must be interpreted. We have always recognised that time would be necessary. But let me draw the attention of the House to the special reasons for our objection to the conditions contained in the Ordinance for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible. I have been frequently attacked in this House, on the ground that the conditions under which natives of South Africa are employed in the mines are exactly the same as the conditions under which the Chinamen are employed. Let me say here that I have noticed that answers which I have given on this subject have been mutilated for the purpose of quotation. For instance, I said the other day, in answer to a question as to the conditions under which natives and Chinese were respectively employed, that the natives were not, of course, subject to the conditions and restrictions of the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance, but in other respects they were not dissimilar. The first part of the answer is omitted, and use is made of the words: "The conditions are not dissimilar," apart from their context and apart from the explanatory sentence that precedes them. That may be a very useful form of political controversy to hon. Gentlemen opposite, but it scarcely entitles them to hold up their hands in holy horror at any placards or criticisms of their action in the past. The distinction between Chinese and native labour is simply this. The South African native who enlists for service in the Transvaal mines is in his own country, or one closely similar to it; all he does is to cross a political boundary and he finds himself in the main amidst races closely related to his own. He engages for a short term of service, six months, nine months, or a year at the outside, and he is able to return to his own people at the termination of his service. The Chinese coolie, on the other hand, is separated by an impassable barrier—the sea—from his native land, and he is condemned by the terms of his indentures to service of not less than three years duration. The native who goes to the Transvaal may, if he pleases, remain in the Transvaal at the end of his term of service, and the Government of the Transvaal is only too glad that he should do so. He can settle down and marry and bring up a family; he may own land and engage in trade; he may become a skilled artisan. The Ordinance devised by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and of which he is such an admirer, forces the Chinese coolie to leave South Africa when the term of his engagement has expired. Throughout the duration of his term of service he is forbidden to be anything but an unskilled labourer. He is required to act as nearly as possible as a human machine. His function is to extract gold for his employer, and when his utility is finished he is to be cast aside as a creature with whom it is filthy to come into contact. Under the special restrictions of this Ordinance the Chinese coolie is subjected to a law which creates a variety of offences unknown to the ordinary law. It is a criminal offence for him to desert from the service of his employer or to refuse to work for his employer. It is a criminal offence if he carries on any business other than that of an unskilled labourer in the exploitation of minerals. He is guilty of a criminal offence if he enters the service of any person other than the importer or his transferee; if he engages in any trade or business; if he acquires, holds, or leases, directly or indirectly, any fixed property or mining rights; or if he leaves the premises on which he is employed without a permit. Indeed his ability to commit offences is the only thing that distinguishes him from a machine. Under the Ordinance of 1905, Chinese coolies are not only responsible for individual offences; they may be punished collectively on suspicion of a particular group of coolies, and fines may be deducted from their wages. They may be punished criminally for losing the property of their employer, or for using insulting language to their employers. The Ordinance empowers any private white person to arrest a coolie without warrant outside the Witwatersrand district. In spite of these restrictions the Chinese coolies frequently do desert, and lamentable results follow. I wish the House to realise the distinction we make. Our objection is against special legislation of that kind, for which we cannot possibly become responsible. The right hon. Gentleman says we are responsible for allowing it to go on. We are responsible for not bringing it to a close. Any Ordinance which we have sanctioned is not for the purpose of continuing Chinese labour, but for the express purpose of bringing it to a close. It is perfectly well known to anybody who has taken the trouble to consider the question that it would be quite impossible to allow all the Chinese who are in South Africa, until they have finished their indentures, to disperse broadcast through the land. The people of South Africa would not allow it; the security and order of the whole country would disappear; you would never get them out of South Africa. This House knows perfectly well that the continuance of the restrictions under which they are at present working would be perfectly intolerable if it were part of a system by which Chinese labour was to be continued. But it is a necessary part of the process of liquidation, and as such it commands the support of those who have laboured so long and so earnestly to achieve that object. What is the attitude of the Party opposite? They talk about pledges. They were never concerned to bring Chinese labour to a close. The one pledge they would like to have extracted from us was that it should be continued in permanence. If any Minister on this bench had committed himself to a pledge of that kind, what has happened now would have been a breach and violation of that pledge. Pledges were given to gentlemen who were resolutely determined to bring to an end the system of Chinese labour.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): To Parliament and the country.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I agree with what the right hon. Gentleman says. They were pledges given to Parliament and the country, and Parliament and the country must judge of their fulfilment. What are we to think of the attitude of the Party opposite? During the time that the Transvaal was represented only by a small group of capitalists, the great mining magnates, anything which menaced the mining industry was the object of violent attack from hon. Gentlemen opposite. We were told that in attacking the mining industry we were not only sapping the springs of prosperity in South Africa, but menacing the dominion of British power and the honour of the British flag. But now that the election has taken place and a responsible Government is in power and authority in the Transvaal, all their solicitude for the mines has vanished. These mines, which were so carefully guarded when they were directed in the interests of the few, have come to be regarded as a legitimate object of attack now that they are controlled by a Government elected on a wide franchise, and hon. Gentlemen exert themselves to show that this or that system of labour—native labour from different parts of South Africa—will produce evil conditions. I am far from saying that the conditions under which the natives are employed in the Witwatersrand district or on the Rand are wholly satisfactory, but I can say that there has been a great improvement in the condition of the native labourers. In the year 1903, in the course of a debate on the condition of the native labourers, raised in this House by my hon. and gallant friend below the gangway, it was stated that the mortality among the native labourers amounted to seventy-eight per 1,000. That rate of mortality was reduced in 1905 by Parliamentary agitation to forty-six per 1,000. During the time the present responsible Government has been in power in the Transvaal —who are sending away Chinese in shiploads every month—the mortality among the native labourers has been materially reduced. The figure now is thirty-two per 1,000.

MR. LYTTELTON said the right hon. Gentleman had permitted Dr. Sansome, the medical officer specially appointed by the late Government, to be dismissed by the Boer Parliament.

MR. CHURCHILL: I object strongly to the expression "the Boer Parliament." In the course which the Transvaal Government have pursued in regard to the mining industry they have the support, not only of their own followers, who include half the British residents, but also of that minority who hitherto have been always opposed to them. By earnest efforts the Transvaal Government has been very successful in coping with a great difficulty in a short time; General Botha's Government has succeeded in reducing the rate of mortality considerably below the figure at which it stood under the right hon. Gentleman's Crown Colony administration, and it is no business of ours to ask whether they wish to employ Dr. Sansome or anyone else. I submit to the House that the course which His Majesty's Government has taken with regard to Chinese labour has been vindicated at every step, and that the result is much better than we hoped for. It is far better for us that the people of South Africa should make a clean sweep of the Chinese than that they should put forward a series of amended Ordinances with the object of trying to secure the continuance of Chinese labour under conditions which ought not to be tolerated in this country. I rejoice that they have taken the course they have done; and I venture to think that, having taken that course, they deserve the ordinary fair play that is extended to self-governing Colonies all over the British Empire. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may some day be called upon to administer affairs and to deal with the Dutch Governments in South Africa. In the main, they are Dutch Governments. They have accepted office under the Crown and they are loyally fulfilling their duty. I earnestly hope, when hon. Gentlemen opposite come into power, they will so conduct affairs as to make these Governments feel that they will be treated with that measure of fair play which is extended so fully to other self-governing Colonies.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said the right hon. Gentleman had done him the honour of mentioning his name in the course of his speech. He had said that no amount of laughter on his part would bring the Chinese back to South Africa. Apparently no amount of speeches on the part of the right hon. Gentleman would send the Chinese out of South Africa, for there were nearly as many there now as at the time this Government came into office. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no."] He understood there were 30,000 there now.

MR. CHURCHILL: Under 28,000.

MR. BONAR LAW said the right hon. Gentleman had thought it wise to seem not to understand. The whole point of the charge made against the Government by his right hon. friend had been left unanswered. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had delivered a very irrelevant and a very confused speech. He did not say that in disparagement of the right hon. Gentleman's ability. His observations showed his Parliamentary aptitude. Parliamentary aptitude was shown not more clearly in making a good and incisive speech when one had a good case, than in making a confused and irrelevant speech when one had a bad case, and when his only hope was to try to confuse the issue. In this instance that was a forlorn hope. The issue was too plain, too precise, and too definite. The charge made by his right hon. friend was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in order to get over a temporary Parliamentary difficulty gave to the House of Commons a solemn pledge that if the new Government in the Transvaal attempted to keep the Chinese by conditions similar to those prevailing under the old Ordinance His Majesty's Government would prevent them doing so. That was the pledge solemnly, deliberately, and openly given in the House of Commons. It had been broken. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] It had been deliberately, if not openly, broken, and if hon. Gentlemen were satisfied with the explanations which the right hon. Gentleman had given of that transaction, then they were very easily satisfied. He was sure that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not leave it there?

MR. ASQUITH: Leave what?

MR. BONAR LAW: The case as put by his right hon. friend. It did indeed involve the honour of His Majesty's Government as a whole, but it involved in a special degree the honour of the Minister who made that pledge, and who had deliberately allowed it to be broken. What did the right hon. Gentleman mean by talking about intentions? What the Members of the Opposition had to do with was what the Government had done. They made a pledge, and they had broken it, and if there was anything in the right hon. Gentleman's interruption, it was only this, that the Colonial Office had done it behind his back, as well as behind the back of the House of Commons. The Under-Secretary had gone over a very large part of this ancient controversy; he had said it was strange that the Opposition had not tried to find something novel. There was a slight novelty in this transaction. Up to now similar incidents on the part of His Majesty's Government had only been used for the purpose of deceiving the public. That was characteristic of the whole of the efforts of His Majesty's Government, and but for the intervention of his right hon. friend their endeavours would have been successfully directed to deceiving their own followers, in spite of the eloquent defence of the policy of the Government by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. There was no page in our political history more remarkable, more disgraceful than the whole action of His Majesty's Government from beginning to end in regard to Chinese labour. Before the general election South Africa was useful to the Government in enabling them to get into power, and since they had got into power they had dealt with South Africa as if their whole interest in it was still to win elections, and as if they had no sense of responsibility whatever in respect of the interests of that great continent. He was not going to make that charge without proving it. He could prove it up to the hilt from speeches made in this House by the right hon. Gentleman who represented the Government on this question. In his first speech on this subject in the new Parliament the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies admitted that the policy of the Government had been to lower the value of securities in South Africa. He admitted that, and boasted of it. [AN HON. MEMBER: Quote.] He was sure he would be asked to quote. The right hon. Gentleman said—

"If anyone will study the fall in prices that, I regret to say, has followed the declaration of His Majesty's Government's policy, they will see that it is not a sham fight in which we are engaged, but that, on the contrary, we are using ball cartridge."

The right hon. Gentleman boasted that the Government had caused a fall in these mining securities.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I would crave the indulgence of the House to remind him of the circumstances in which that statement was made. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had indicated that all the alterations the Government were making in the Ordinance were not real alterations, and that they would produce no substantial effect in South Africa. The right hon. Gentleman said they were submitted to the mining magnates before they were made, and that those gentlemen were perfectly satisfied with them. That was a statement calculated to make hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House dissatisfied with the alterations, and the statement which the hon. Gentleman has quoted was made to show that the alterations were genuine.

MR. BONAR LAW said he did not think the explanation in the least affected the arguments he had used. Whatever might be the right hon. Gentleman's ground for making the statement, he did not deny that the policy of the Government had caused a fall in these shares, and if he might be permitted to do so, speaking from memory, he would say that the right hon. Gentleman's statement was entirely wrong. He thought the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham spoke not before but after the right hon. Gentleman made the speech in which these words were used. It was not an interruption of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham that caused the statement. Therefore, he could not see the force of the right hon. Gentleman's interruption. He asked the House to consider the effect of that policy. It meant not only a loss of money to the men who held shares. The mining industry was the industry on which depended, and would for a long time depend, the whole prosperity of the Transvaal. It was not confined only to the Transvaal. It was the whole of South Africa. When the mining industry flourished the whole of South Africa flourished, and when that industry was depressed the whole of South Africa was depressed. The action of His Majesty's Government which caused this fall in the shares had precisely the same effect on the whole industry of South Africa. It destroyed confidence and prevented the employment of capital, and was the direct cause of a great part of the unemployment which prevailed in South Africa. He quite admitted that circumstances might arise to justify the Government in the action they took on moral grounds. That was precisely the claim made by the right hon. Gentleman. That was why he caused a reduction in the price of the shares. He said—

> "I had the good fortune to address as many meetings in the country as anyone, and I know that there was no subject which caused greater and more genuine sorrow among the people than the belief that Chinamen were being kept in the mines against their will."

That was the ground on which they took action, which caused all the depression in South Africa. He admitted that if that ground were justified there would be some excuse for the policy of the Government. But could it be justified? Let the right hon. Gentleman himself give the answer. Only two or three months afterwards in the House of Commons he used these words—

> "It is impossible to resist the conclusion that there is no general desire on the part of the coolies to leave the Witwatersrand and return to China."

Could anything more completely condemn the wanton recklessness with which this whole question had been dealt with than that the Government should have taken these steps for an object which a few months inquiry satisfied them did not exist at all? That was only the material side of the question, but there was another and more important side, namely, the moral aspect. They knew how the Government intended to deal with this question after they came into office. It was declared most emphatically in the first speech made by the Under-Secretary in stating the policy of the Government that their view was that Chinese labour had served its purpose, that they were done with it, that they would wash their hands of it, and hand it over to the new Government to be erected in the Transvaal. Every word in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman representing the declared and settled policy of the Government bore that construction. He read it over yesterday. There was not a word in it which did not bear that interpretation. The right hon. Gentleman said they would still have the same control as over Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, and their policy was to leave the question to the Transvaal Legislature. But what happened? The Government were amazed to find among their own followers a number who not only used Chinese slavery as an election cry, but actually believed it. They had to meet a new situation, and it was then that the Chancellor of the Exchequer came down and made the pledge. The right hon. Gentleman said that if there was any attempt to renew the Ordinance on the lines of the old Ordinance he would veto it. They had renewed it, and he had not vetoed it. Now the country was beginning to realise what a tremendous fraud had been practised upon them at the election. The country was amazed, and he was sure that the House of Commons was amazed, to find that at the very time when on thousands of platforms throughout the country denunciations of cruelty and slavery in the Transvaal were going on, the men who were pouring out that rhetoric were themselves engaged signing a convention infinitely worse both from the humanitarian and the moral point of view. He referred to the New Hebrides Convention. But it was not merely the New Hebrides Convention. What were they to say of the treatment allowed to be given to British Indians in the Transvaal? He fully admitted the difficulty of dealing with this question. There was a difficulty in having Asiatics introduced in a country controlled by white men. But that ought not to be a difficulty to Gentlemen who sat on the Treasury bench. What were the evidences of slavery? The two evidences of slavery of which they had heard most in the House of Commons were finger-print identification, which was said to be associated with criminals, and the inability of the Chinese to hold property. Both of these conditions were applied to British Indians in the Transvaal, and not only to those brought in after the Transvaal Government came in, but to those who were there at the time. It was no use to say that, if they had a self-governing colony, these regulations must be left to them. If the conditions represented slavery in the one case, they represented slavery in the other; and if they were called upon in the name of humanity to prevent these conditions in the case of the Chinese, they were infinitely more bound to prevent them in the case of the British Indians, because they were British subjects. He came back to the specific charge against the Government. They made a pledge, and they had broken it. [MINISTERIAL Cries of "Oh, oh!"] He wondered what the majority of hon. Members opposite thought of the action of the Government. They were not like ordinary Members of a Government. They placed themselves on a pinnacle of special virtue. They were always to do everything in the most downright straightforward way. Never was heard such a multitude of noble sentiments. But noble sentiments from the time of "The School for Scandal," and probably long before, had been taken with a discount in this world. In ordinary life they found that men who made high professions did not generally act up to them. In his business experience he had frequently met men who talked of high commercial morality and high business principles. They might not refuse to do business with such men, but they watched their contracts with special care, because they knew that they would swindle if they could. It was precisely the same with the Government. Instead of standing on that lofty pinnacle, they had now fallen to a level far below the level of ordinary political morality. He did not know what the House of Commons thought of it all; but he did know what the country thought of it. The Gentlemen who sat on the Treasury Bench had now been on trial for two years before the country, and at every opportunity they were being convicted of having exploited some of the highest and noblest feelings of the people for party purposes, and party purposes alone. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had told them that there was a difficulty sometimes in giving relief to their feelings. He felt it himself in addressing the House. He felt the limitations imposed by the rules of debate. In speaking of these transactions they had to use Parliamentary language, but Parliamentary language was quite inadequate. On this occasion he thought he could get over the difficulty by quoting a description of His Majesty's Government in anticipation by an hon. Gentleman who was then a supporter of that Government, and was now a Member of it. The Secretary to the Local Government Board, in the first debate in this new Parliament, said—

> "If we allow this thing to continue, we shall be infernal hypocrites."

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): Hear, hear!

MR. BONAR LAW said that the hon. Member declared that he did not mean it to continue for a few years, and that if Chinese labour continued for six months after the Liberal Government came into power—

> "And I were there, I would be a very unhappy man."

The statement of the Secretary to the Local Government Board was, however, undoubtedly—

> "If we allow this thing to continue we shall be infernal hypocrites."

The description of the hon. Gentleman was adequate—quite adequate—and it had the additional advantage that it described the position with scientific accuracy.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not going to pay very much attention to the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, whose intervention in our South African debates is always a source of unmixed disadvantage. I cannot remember a single session in which he has not in these debates used language to inflame passion, to arouse party spirit, and to make the task of the conduct of the great experiment now going on for the settlement of self-government in that country infinitely more difficult. I should not have risen at all if it were not that my right hon. friend, whose special title to speak on this subject cannot be questioned, not only charged the Government, but me in particular, with a gross breach of faith. The Government is charged, and I am particularly charged, with having deliberately broken a solemn pledge given to the House of Commons. And it is only now, for the first time, since the pledge was given to the House of Commons that I am subjected to this charge. The hon. Members behind me, to conciliate whose suspicion the pledge is supposed to have been given, have not made this charge. I have not heard it from a single one of the hon. Gentlemen behind me, not from the most ardent advocates in its most extreme form of the policy of Chinese repatriation. I have not heard it from one of them, and I do not expect to hear from them. [Ironical OPPOSITION cheers and laughter]. Hon. Gentlemen laugh. Do they think the standard of public honour in this country has sunk so low that if the Government had in this matter been guilty of a breach of faith, my hon. friends are so steeped in partisanship that they would remain silent? They do not make the charge, because they know very well that it is an unfounded charge; and I am going to show that it is. First of all, it is suggested that in the speech I made on which this accusation is founded, I threw over—to use a common expression—my right hon. friend the Under-Secretary. Let me, therefore, quote the exact words of my right hon. friend. He said—

> "I think that they (the Transvaal Parliament) will bring the experiment gradually but surely, to an end."

But while believing that, the matter was to be left entirely in the hands of the Transvaal Parliament.

MR. BONAR LAW: Go on.

MR. ASQUITH: I am going on. I am going to point out, first, what was the charge. The charge is that this question had played its part—that we had used it as a gambling card at the election, and we had no longer any concern about it. What my right hon. friend, however, said, was—

> "That, while believing that the Transvaal Parliament would bring the experiment gradually, but surely, to an end—"

a belief well-justified by the event—

> "—it would be unreasonable not to face the other alternative, however remote the contingency of it may be. What if the Colony should decide to continue the importation of Chinese?"

That is the point, the point to which my right hon. friend's speech was directed, and my subsequent speech was directed. "What if the Colony should decide to continue the importation of Chinese," that is to say, make the system of importing Chinese labour under indenture part of the settled labour policy of the country. What did my right hon. friend say of that contingency? He said—

> "I must point out that while the responsibility of the Imperial Government would be lessened our objections to the present conditions under which Chinese labour is carried on will not be removed by any vote of the Transvaal Assembly, however unanimous, however representative."

MR. BONAR LAW: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman but this quotation does not touch the question. The Under-Secretary said his objection would remain, but he only meant that the same remedy would be open as could be applied to all our other Colonies.

MR. ASQUITH: It means that you are reserving the right to refuse the Royal Assent to the objectionable measure, and that if, in the opinion of the responsible advisers of the Crown such a measure ought not to be passed, the Royal Assent is not given. That is exactly what I said the next night. And now what does it come to? It is alleged that I threw over my right hon. friend and promulgated on the part of the Government an entirely different policy from that which he announced. Now we have the admission of the hon. Gentleman that our two statements come to precisely the same thing. A nice foundation on which to build charges of breach of faith! Although I was speaking with the full assent of my colleagues and in their name, I do not shirk in the least degree the personal responsibility which is attached to me. What did I say? First, I pointed out, in language which has been already quoted, that it was impossible that a system of this kind when once introduced could be stopped at once. The great thing to do was to stop its permanent continuation. I remember deliberately selecting what had taken place in the West Indies for purposes of illustration. That was slavery; say what you like about this. [Ironical OPPOSITION cheers.] Personally I admit I never called it slavery.

MR. BONAR LAW: You profited by others so calling it.

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Gentleman profits by a great many things which he would not like to avow. He is trying to do so, I think, at this moment. But do not let us go back upon that. There is no question that African slavery in the West Indies was slavery pure and simple; yet this House, anxious and willing to put an end at the earliest date to a system repugnant to our best traditions, allowed the system of forced apprenticeships to go on for no less a time than seven years. Why? Not for the purpose of continuing slavery, but for the purpose of putting an end to it—for the purpose of terminating an indefensible state of things with the least avoidable disturbance of the economic, industrial, and social conditions which had been set up. Having used that analogy, which showed clearly what was in my mind, I went on to deal with the question of South Africa, and I said that the question which in the opinion of the Government ought to remain within the competence of the Transvaal Government would be whether or not they cared to retain Chinese labour in South Africa. I will undertake to say that there was not a single man who listened to me or who read my speech who did not understand what I meant—not to put an end to Chinese labour at once in the most expeditious manner, but to do away with the system which had been employed. I challenge anyone to get up and say that for a moment I thought of dealing with anything but that. I went on to give a pledge, and I repeat that pledge now, a pledge which I say we have fulfilled both in letter and in spirit. I said at the end of that speech that I did not anticipate that such a contingency would arise; and what was the contingency? The contingency was the retention of the system of Chinese labour as part of the institutions of the country by the Transvaal Government.

MR. LYTTELTON, interposing, said it was clearly understood that should a proposal to continue Chinese labour under the conditions of the Ordinance be made, he would advise that it should be vetoed.

MR. ASQUITH: And so I would. Let the Transvaal Legislature pass an Act—which I know very well they will not—to permit a continuance of the importation of Chinese labour under the conditions of the Ordinance, and his Majesty's Government will advise a veto of it. Everybody knew that was the sole point to which my speech was directed. I should have been very glad, I think everybody would have been glad if possible, to put an end to the system at an earlier date than it has been found possible to do so. It was with very great reluctance that we consented to a continuance for a very short time in an amended form; but that is a matter we thought we might very well leave to the judgment of the Transvaal Legislature, and they have clearly indicated that the whole thing shall come to an end at the earliest possible moment. I always thought they would, I said in my speech I was convinced they would, when I said that if the contrary course were taken the veto would be applied. I hope that is a plain statement, and I confess that when that statement was made and universally understood in the House and the country, when I made my speech on the policy of His Majesty's Government, I am entitled to feel a little resentment at these very grave and unusual indictments for breach of political faith and of personal honour made against members of the Government. I need make no appeal to the House; I am certain there is not a man on these benches who will believe I would willingly be guilty of a deliberate breach of an engagement. Of course, when a man gives a pledge he must be careful not to make any reservation in his own mind which is not patent and obvious to the minds of those to whom he speaks, and in this instance what I said and what I intended was understood by everyone who listened to me.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am the last man to desire to make charges against my political opponents upon matters even remotely connected with personal honour, and I may say the same of my right hon. friend, but when the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes an indignant repudiation of the conclusions arrived at by my right hon. friend based on what he assumed to be the clear, undoubted meaning of what he said, I think he is straining the credulity of everybody who reads the speech. What are the facts of the case as they appear on the records before the House? Right hon. Gentlemen have made two speeches for the Government, and the first and longest of these speeches never dealt with the charge made at all. The right hon. Gentleman, the Under Secretary, came down to the House fully prepared to make an effective defence of the Government policy in regard to black labour and yellow labour in the Transvaal, but not to deal with the point raised by my right hon. friend this evening, and not being prepared to deal with it, he left it on one side altogether. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will not think I am saying anything derogatory to his abilities and his readiness, but we are accustomed in this House, when a colleague of a Minister is attacked and a Minister rises to reply, to expect that he will not deal with broad generalities and topics not raised in the attack, but with the plain and simple issue brought before the House. Now, the right hon. Gentleman did not do my right hon. friend the honour to refer in a definite manner to the specific charge brought forward. He made a great many rather uncomplimentary references to my right hon. friend, which I fancy my right hon. friend will bear with equanimity, but on the charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just repudiated with such indignant warmth, there is not a word from the right hon. Gentleman who represents the Department.

MR. CHURCHILL: I thought when I said that the Ordinance which we had sanctioned was to extend the term to terminate contracts and bring the system to an end—I thought that was an answer. I had not the dialectical skill to drive home the reply as my right hon. friend did, but it was the same answer my right hon. friend has now made with so much force.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Neither the dialectical ability of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of which the right hon. Gentleman does not give too high an account, nor his own personal gifts in debate, to which he has too modestly referred, are sufficient to explain to the House that an Ordinance which extends provisions for two-and-a-half years is in fact an Ordinance bringing them to a conclusion. I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks he made his meaning quite plain even to Gentlemen below the gangway, that extending the existing Ordinance two-and-a-half years was a periphrastic way of describing what was bringing it to an end, and that it did not mislead or lead to anticipation of unfavourable criticism from any of the gentlemen who threatened the extinction of the Government in the moment of its triumph. Still, we want to know how it is that the Government have assented to an Ordinance which proposes to continue for two-and-a-half years a condition of things they have themselves described as slavery. The right hon. Gentleman says everybody who heard his speech—I, unfortunately, did not hear it [Mr. Asquith handed a volume of the *Parliamentary Debates* across the Table]; I have read it since—everybody who heard or read the speech must have understood what he meant, and must have been convinced that what he referred to was action by the Transvaal which contemplated further importation of Chinese labour; that was what he was thinking of, and that was what the Under-Secretary was thinking of—that if the Transvaal Government were rash enough to import fresh Chinese the Government would have the courage of their opinions and advise the Sovereign to disallow the proposal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said just now that he had pledged himself to disallow fresh importation——

Mr. ASQUITH: That was the first thing, and I added the continuation permanently or indefinitely of the system of Chinese labour.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Where is the word "permanent" used in the speech? That is the word used now, but it was not used then. I do not think it can be seriously denied by any Gentleman who recollects the tenor of that speech and of that from another Member of the Government, that what was expected, believed, and hoped for by hon. Gentlemen below the gangway was that the Chinese would leave South Africa by the time the colony had self-government and a clean slate. ["No, no."]

> "Let me say, then, that the time would come, about a year after self-government was instituted, when the Transvaal Government would have the opportunity of dealing with the whole situation with a clean slate. Then when the time came they would have the alternative of sending the Chinese home or of giving them employment under ordinary conditions."

I do not know why the hon. Member for East Mayo says that is not the case. He has only to read page 675 of the *Debates* to see that it is the case. The Transvaal Government have absolute power to determine the economic question of whether or not they shall have Chinamen labouring in the country.

Mr. DILLON: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I listened to the whole of the debate in the House. I took a very keen interest in the subject. I belong to an independent party, and the impression given to my mind was that the alternative was this: whether as soon as the Chinamen had finished their contracts and as was practically possible they should be sent home, or whether the Transvaal Government should make the Chinese labour permanent and allow it to continue in the country.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I must be permitted to appeal from the memory of the hon. Gentleman to the speech which I have before me. If it is suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that his speech has been mis-reported, an unhappy event to which we are all liable, of course I have nothing more to say, but if the speech is accurately reported there is really only one interpretation to be put upon it—

> "The Transvaal Government have absolute power to determine the economic question, whether or not they will have Chinamen labouring in the country."

Then he goes on—it is not necessary for me to read the whole of it—

> "So long as we on this bench are responsible for the conduct of affairs, any legislation

corresponding to the Ordinance or inconsistent with the best British traditions will be disallowed."

Now on the second branch of that contention I put this to the hon. Member for East Mayo. There are only two questions to be asked; first: Has there been fresh legislation, and secondly: Has that legislation corresponded to our Ordinance or been inconsistent with the best British traditions?

MR. DILLON: As the right hon. Gentleman puts the specific question to me, I say that I listened to those very words and the meaning I put upon them was this that "Corresponding to that Ordinance" meant an Ordinance allowing the importation to continue—to become permanent.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I put no question to the hon. Member. I said there were only two questions to be asked, and I beg the hon. Member to listen to the points; those are the only two questions to be asked, and how are they to be answered. There has been fresh legislation and that legislation has been on the old lines, and, therefore, it is absolutely undeniable that so far as the language of the speech goes the Government have broken their pledges. If the right hon. Gentleman says to me, your interpretation may be grammatically accurate, it may be that the speech may be read in that way now in 1908, that that is the construction which any reader might put upon it now, but that I can assure the House that in 1906 I meant something quite different—I have no answer to that. If that is the right hon. Gentleman's point we are all ready to bow to him, and believe that in 1906 he meant something that his speech read in 1908 does not convey.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have always said that it was not in the power of the Government to determine contracts before they expired by the effluxion of time, and that they meant to terminate the system at the conclusion of the contract; therefore we have not been guilty of a breach of faith.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman appears to have forgotten some of the most important elements of the controversy. The whole point is that an opportunity apparently contemplated by the Government in 1906 occurs—the opportunity of the clean slate. The Government in 1906 said that when it did occur they would see that these slavery conditions were not repeated. They have been repeated by legislation, and therefore, if language means anything, the Government are open to the charge made by my right hon. friend. That is manifest in the Constitution. It is not one element, it is a conclusion borne in upon one's mind by all the elements of the Constitution as passed. It is not worth forcing it farther. I do not think anybody will get up and deny that, so far as the language of the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is concerned, we have not forced it, twisted or turned it in any degree to show that the policy adopted by the Government is an absolute contradiction to that which at one time they said they would pursue. I cannot help thinking that on this vexed question a great deal of light might very easily be thrown. My right hon. friend reminded us that it was in the dying days of last session that the Transvaal Government passed *sub silentio* the Ordinance which continued for two and a half years the conditions of slavery in South Africa. It was not known to the House when the House rose.

*MR. MACKARNESS said that on 21st August there was a debate in the House on this subject. The right hon. Gentleman was not present nor was the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, but a debate took place and both himself and his hon. friend the Member for Preston sitting behind him pointed out that that Ordinance was being passed by the Transvaal Legislature and expressed their views upon it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am glad the hon. Gentleman has interrupted me, because it has enabled me to look again at what transpired four or five days after the debate at which he expressed his view took place. I now find that four or five days after that debate the hon. and learned Gentleman himself asked whether the servile conditions expressly prohibited by the terms of the Transvaal

Constitution were to be re-enacted for three years. It is therefore perfectly plain that the hon. and learned Gentleman at that time took the same view of the policy of the Government that we take now. What process of conversion has gone on in the eight or nine months that have elapsed I know not, but it is quite apparent that on the 26th August last year the hon Gentleman was of the opinion which we hold now.

*MR. MACKARNESS: I stated just now that I was of that opinion then, and am of that opinion now.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not know the hon. Gentleman adhered to that opinion. I was misled by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has sources of information as to his followers not open to me and who confidently expressed the opinion half an hour ago that there was not a Gentleman below the gangway, who took a different view from himself.

MR. ASQUITH: I must not allow a fresh charge to be made. That was not what I said. I said there was not a single one of my hon. friends who accused us of breach of pledge.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know what view the hon. and learned Gentleman takes on the matter of breach of faith. But he does think that something has been done inconsistent with the Constitution of the Transvaal. He does think the Transvaal Constitution exactly squared with the pledges of the Government. He therefore thinks something has been done inconsistent with the pledges of the Government. He may think that all right; it is for him to explain when he speaks. What I am concerned with is to ask the Government if they will lay upon the Table the correspondence which I am sure must have occurred and which if it did occur will at least throw a great deal of light on all these matters. The late Colonial Secretary commented on the fact that this important proceeding had been carried through without Parliament having any knowledge of it. There must have been some correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Transvaal Government. Can we have that correspondence? I have been a good deal interrupted in the course of my speech, not in any unfriendly way I admit, but if I could be interrupted now by the Under-Secretary, and if he could give me an assurance that all the documents dealing with this matter could be laid before the House, it would be a source of great satisfaction to myself and my friends. Until we see that correspondence we are not in possession of all the materials on which to form a judgment on this difficult question. So far our only material lies in the pages of *Hansard.* These pages are susceptible of one interpretation, and one only, and that is absolutely inconsistent, not indeed with the speech of the Under-Secretary, for he never referred to it, but with the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and I think if the right hon. Gentleman consults, not his memory or his recollection, but the actual words which he used, he will be forced to the conclusion that nothing that has been said from this bench goes beyond the facts as they lie before us.

COLONEL SEELY said the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who no doubt was a sufficiently acute Parliamentarian, had avoided making any reference to the real charge which had been made. When the debate began the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, made a charge in language so surprising that he must confess he had never heard anything like it in that House. The Leader of the Opposition, with that caution for which he was justly famed, had not said one word in justification of that outrageous charge. When the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, made his assertion all who were on the Ministerial benches thought he had got hold of some document showing that the Government had assented to a fresh importation from Madagascar or elsewhere. What had he said? Let them inquire what truth there was in the charge. The right hon. Gentleman had deliberately said that behind the back of Parliament and without its knowledge the Government had sanctioned a system of labour which they thought to be slavery; in point of fact, that they had assented to an Ordinance which, thank goodness, and not hon. Members opposite, would have the result that the subject of this controversy would be over and done with in a year and a half's time. In regard to that Ordinance, which had been called the winding-up Ordinance, Questions had been asked in that House on 5th August, and again on the 12th, when further specific Questions were put. On 21st August there was a debate on the subject, which, on the 26th, was again raised, and Questions asked.

MR. LYTTELTON: How could the subject be raised on 26th August when it did not exist until 30th December? The charge I made was that the Ordinance passed in August was not sanctioned until 30th December, and what pretence has anybody for saying that notice was given in August?

COLONEL SEELY said the right hon. Gentleman had undoubtedly led the House to believe that he had got hold of some proposal of which that House had never heard, and that the Government had sanctioned some law of which that House had not the least conception, or that it was not even before the public. The right hon. Gentleman asked the House whether they had ever heard of any public paper or documents in which it was referred to, and when they replied that they had heard of it, he expressed great surprise. The right hon. Gentleman was so candid and so sincere—he said this with absolute truth—that nobody in that House could believe that he had his tongue in his cheek. If it had been anybody else but the right hon. Gentleman who had brought the matter forward, after the questions they had asked in August last, he really should have supposed that the reason why this question—finally settled on 30th December last—had been raised on 23rd March, had something to do with an election to take place on the following day. He would refer the right hon. Gentleman to a Question put by the hon. Member for Preston on 12th August last, and the reply thereto, which he felt perfectly certain the right hon. Gentleman could not have had in his mind. The following was the Question—

> "I beg to ask the Under-Secretary for the Colonies whether the Transvaal Government has introduced a Bill to prolong the restrictions of the Chinese Labour Ordinance after that Ordinance expires in March next, and if so what action His Majesty's Government intend to take."

The reply was as follows—

> "The policy of the Transvaal Government, so far as I understand it, is to repatriate the Chinese labourers at the termination of their indentures without permitting those indentures to be renewed. Under the Letters Patent the existing Labour Importation Ordinance lapses on 21st March, 1908. An interval will therefore arise during which some provision for the government of the Chinese who are waiting their turn to go is indispensable to the order and security of the Colony, and, indeed, to the complete termination of the Chinese labour experiment. His Majesty's Government have always recognised that some measure of this kind would probably be necessary as part of the machinery of repatriation upon expiry of contracts, and the Secretary of State explained the necessity in his place in Parliament in reply to a question on 17th June last."

Was there ever anything more plain that this matter was fully known to the House? Surely the right hon. Gentleman must have been absent from the House at the end of last session, because in the lobby and in the House the question was being discussed as to whether the winding-up Ordinance was a breach of the promise given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He believed there were only two or three Members who believed that the winding-up Ordinance, as they called it, ought not to be as stringent as the Ordinance under which the Chinese first came. Their contention was that they ought never to allow it to remain on the Statute Book, even for a moment longer, under conditions which were tantamount to slavery. That was what they said then and what they said now. The majority of Members on that side of the House saw plainly that owing to the intense objection of the people of the Transvaal to having Chinese in their midst, and owing also to the fact that only Chinamen who were not of the best character would come under such servile conditions, they could not retain the Chinese without hemming them in with all those restrictions to which they took exception. It was for that very reason they had condemned the Ordinance again and again in that House. It carried with it its own condemnation, because they could not have it without imposing restrictions which were foreign to English law, and, he would suggest, to English morals as well. He had endeavoured to deal with the charge brought by the right hon. Gentleman. Questions had certainly been asked on 3rd, 12th, and 21st August, and now that he had enlightened the right hon. Gentleman he thought he should, in accordance with the courtesies of debate, withdraw the gravamen of the charge which he brought at the opening of his speech, and confine his charge to the purely technical matter, that under the promise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the winding-up Ordinance ought to have been of a character wholly different from the original Ordinance which they had sanctioned. But the suggestion that Parliament knew nothing of this Ordinance was plainly a gross mis-statement, and he called upon the right hon. Gentleman with confidence to withdraw it.

Mr. LYTTELTON: The hon. Gentleman asks me to withdraw in consequence of something done in August. I will meet him with this answer, given by the Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for Newbury, on the 26th August last. The hon. Member for Newbury asked whether the servile conditions expressly prohibited by the terms of the Constitution were to be re-enacted in three years. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies replied that he could not forecast what would be the action of the Government upon it. I therefore contend that it is ridiculous to say that in August this assent was not unknown to Parliament, because the assent was not given until the 30th December, and it was never communicated to this House or the public.

Mr. CHURCHILL: It has been published in the Transvaal.

Colonel SEELY said it had been known to every Member who had spoken on the subject ever since Parliament met. Again and again the matter had been referred

to, and it was the very first time he had heard it suggested that every Member of the House did not know that it had been sanctioned. The fact of the matter was that the action of the Government meant that Chinese labour in South Africa was coming to an end in a year and a half. The action which the right hon. Gentleman wished to take would have meant that Chinese labour with all its horrible concomitants would be a permanent system.

*__Dr. MACNAMARA__ said the hon. Member for Dulwich had made the charge that they had used the question of Chinese labour for political purposes. He could not help thinking when he listened to his speech that the hon. Gentleman, too, had his eye upon an election at present proceeding in a borough which they both had the honour to represent. He observed that the statement which the hon. Gentleman had made that afternoon with regard to his comment was not exactly the same statement which he had made on Saturday afternoon at the Crown Theatre, Peckham. The hon. Member for Dulwich when at Peckham said he was willing to wager that the Chinese coolies would be in the compounds when this Government went out of office. He would like to take that wager, but as an honourable man he could not bet on a certainty, because, in the language of opponents of the Licensing Bill, to take it would be "pure robbery and confiscation." This was what the hon. Gentleman was reported to have said—

> "It has been declared, according to Dr. Macnamara, that the Liberals would be infernal hypocrites if they allowed the condition of things which had prevailed to continue to prevail in the Transvaal. But they had done so."

The hon. Gentleman had not stood up there and told the House that he charged the Government with allowing the continuance of a condition of things which they found as an ugly legacy that the hon. Member and his friends when they went out of office had left them. The hon. Gentleman had not said in that House what he had told the people of Peckham.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I said precisely the same thing in both places. I said that the hon. Member had stated that they would be infernal hypocrites if they allowed these things to continue. I stated here this afternoon, as I stated at Peckham, that they have allowed them to continue.

*DR. MACNAMARA: Had they done so? He took occasion in the early part of this year to make inquiry at the Colonial Office in regard to the subject, and he found that at the opening of the year 1907 there were 54,000 coolies on the Rand. The Government could not break contracts, and they therefore had to admit the 16,000 who were smuggled in at the eleventh hour by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. For that the Government were not responsible, and they were very much ashamed of it. At the opening of 1907 there were 54,000 coolies, and at the opening of this year there were 34,000 coolies. Was that the same state of things that they found when they came into office? He found that, of the 34,000, 25,000 would go home this year, and that at the close of next year or before the close of January, 1910, the remaining 9,000 would have gone home. Yet the hon. Gentlemen said they had left things exactly where they found them. If they had left them where they found them they would be infernal hypocrites. Personally he would have liked the whole thing to be swept away at once.

MR. BONAR LAW: I am sorry again to interrupt, but I am entitled to do it. The hon. Member has entirely misrepresented what I said about him. My statement was that he said that if they allowed this thing to continue, which was the use of the Chinese in South Africa, they would be infernal hypocrites. I said further that he had in his mind not years but months, for he said in the same speech that if it continued for six months, if there were many of them, he would be an unhappy man.

DR. MACNAMARA said he confessed that he was an unhappy man. But they had not built this ugly fabric that was raised in the teeth of their opposition. But there were these contracts—and they were bound to respect them, much as they disliked it—which were the work of the Party that preceded them. The hon. Gentleman had said quite clearly that whilst he (Dr. Macnamara) said that "if they allowed the condition of things which had prevailed, to continue in the Transvaal, they would be infernal hypocrites," things had been left as they were. They found the maximum of 54,000 and reduced it in a year to 34,000, 25,000 of these went this year and by the end of January, 1910, the remaining 9,000 would have gone. Could anybody say they had left things where they found them? All he could say was that it did not lie with the hon. Member for Dulwich to charge them with having used this for political purposes when he made such a statement at a contested election. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Withdraw."]

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said he had taken very great interest in this subject. The first debate he had taken part in in the House was on the question of Chinese labour. He was quite as sorry as the hon. Member for Camberwell that this thing was not dealt with heroically at the beginning, and entirely removed as part of their public policy. He would certainly like to know whether the subject was raised now because Gentlemen above the gangway protested against the principle of Chinese labour being eradicated and removed from their Colonial policy. He had been anxious during the whole of these discussions to know whether the Party above the gangway were pledged to maintain this form of Colonial Empire if ever they got a majority again, or was this only just a farcical debate for the purpose of electioneering, or did they only wish to revive a subject which he thought was settled? They had heard some very curious speeches. Hon. Members above the gangway had been charging hon. Members opposite with having deliberately and intentionally broken their pledges. On 12th August last, he himself put a supplementary Question, when the matter was under discussion, and protested against the action of the Colonial Office as explained by the Under-Secretary when he said that it would be necessary to re-enact the Ordinance for the remaining period over which the contracts went. That was the reason why he had shown that part of the discussion just now to the hon.

and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division. He remembered the occasion well when he heard the speech of the late Colonial Secretary—when he heard that something had been done behind their backs since Parliament adjourned in August or September last year, he thought they were going to have something entirely new, that none of them knew anything about, and that he might very likely be able to find himself with hon. Members above the gangway attacking the Administration. As a matter of fact it turned out to be something that everyone of them knew about. Therefore he would imagine that these accusations should have been withdrawn the moment proof positive was given that no one had been deceived and that as a matter of fact the House well understood that the exigencies of the labour question in the Transvaal made it necessary, and always would make it necessary wherever the Chinaman was introduced among civilised people, to have some sort of servile condition that ought not to exist among civilised people. The very experiment necessitated those conditions and they were anxious to know whether Gentlemen above the gangway still adhered to that policy. Would they if they were in favour again re-enact, or try to re-enact, that Ordinance with which the country was thoroughly disgusted and wished to get out of its sight as soon as it could, as something entirely foreign to their character and their institutions? It was most important to know from hon. Members above the gangway whether that was their policy or not. With him and his colleagues Chinese labour was more an economic question than any other. They were afraid, when the late Administration were introducing Chinamen into the Rand, because they said other suitable labour could not be secured, that if once that was admitted as a policy in their Imperial affairs in South Africa it might be admitted in South Staffordshire. There were plenty of low-grade mines in Staffordshire which could not be worked, for the simple reason that no one would submit to the conditions that it would be necessary to impose upon the workmen, both as to working conditions and wages, to make them profitable under present circumstances. It would be quite possible with Chinese labour at 2d. a day and the compound system as in South Africa to open up many such mines in the very locality which he presented. Therefore, if they justified this idea of Oriental and yellow labour in one part of the Empire they were afraid it would very soon be extended nearer home. He was most anxious as a result of the discussion to know whether the Conservative Party still hankered after that kind of labour in Crown or any other Colonies. It would be very interesting to workmen all over the country to know whether the complaint was that the Government were not removing the Chinese Labour Ordinance sufficiently quickly or whether it was to Chinese labour being interfered with at all. That was a simple question. Surely the late Colonial Secretary could tell them whether he still believed that that kind of labour and the results as proved by experiment should be retained and extended, whether he had not learnt or forgotten anything during the last three or four years. It was doubtful whether hon. Members favoured it or were against it. If they were opposed to it he would help them in every way to kill it at the first opportunity and would go into the division lobby with them. But was it an honest attack on Chinese labour? Was it not a mere subterfuge—a mere farce—an electioneering discussion? That was more important to the representatives of the working men of the country than any other phase of the subject that had been discussed that afternoon.

*Mr. MACKARNESS said he did not think the right hon. Gentleman the ex-Colonial Secretary when he made his speech had made himself acquainted with what had occurred during August. Undoubtedly it was then well known in the House and in the country that the Transvaal Government were re-enacting the Chinese Ordinance of 1904, and certainly to a great many of them it had caused dismay, and they had distinctly stated what was their view of it. He would take the liberty in justice to himself, because he had been misrepresented, of repeating what he had said in that House on 21st August. He had said that as he understood the reports that had been telegraphed to this country from the Transvaal it was proposed to re-enact the Chinese Ordinance for a period so long as might be required for existing contracts, and if that were so it would be a piece of legislation obviously in violation of the pledges given over and over again by the Government to the effect that no Ordinance of that kind should be enacted after the expiration of the present one, and in violation of the express terms of the letters patent granting the Constitution to the Transvaal. Other Members, and especially the hon. Member for the Ince Division of Lancashire, had also protested on the same occasion. There was a reply from the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in which he said very much what had been said already by his hon. and gallant friend below him, that the Ordinance had not yet reached this country, and therefore they were not aware of its precise terms. But it was perfectly well known on that side of the House, and if it was not known on the other it was only because they had gone away for their holidays and did not read the papers, that that Ordinance had been passed in the Transvaal and that there was certainly grave danger that it would be sanctioned by the Government at home. At that time, when they might have protested with effect, not a single Member on the opposite side said a word upon the subject. What was stated in the House was stated in consequence of telegrams which had appeared from day to day in the papers, and it was now a very unfair charge to make against the Government to say that anything had been done behind the back of Parliament. That was why he had corrected the right hon. Gentleman. But on the main question he held the opinion then that the Ordinance ought not to have been re-enacted, and he was of the same opinion still.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said the first speech he made in the House of Commons was upon the Chinese Labour question, but they had travelled very far indeed since then. At that time he tried to show that the Chinese were not living in South Africa under servile conditions or in a state of slavery. Since then the question of slavery had disappeared, and it had now been reduced to servile conditions. He was inclined to think that the Government would be glad to drop the whole question, but he would like to remind the House that there were now 20 per cent. more people in South Africa working under servile conditions than when the Liberal Government came into office. When the present Government took office there were more Chinese and less black men in the compounds, but now there were less Chinese and a great many more black men living in compounds and enjoying the same conditions of servility. Consequently he was justified in saying that the present Government had largely increased the number of those who were at present living in the compounds. [MINISTERIAL Cries of "No, no."] But that was so. There were 180,000 at present in the compounds, and when the present Government took office there were less than 150,000.

COLONEL SEELY: Does that include black men?

MR. FELL: Certainly.

*COLONEL SEELY: But they are under the ordinary law.

MR. FELL: Yes, I know they are. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies had made a very lame explanation of the difference in the treatment meted out to the blacks and to the yellow men in those compounds. He was aware that black men had not to be brought to South Africa by ships and they did not have their passage paid. That was done only for the Chinese. The black men were imported from Portuguese possessions and some came from the Transvaal and at the end of their service many of them were able to walk home. It had been said that the blacks were engaged only for six, nine, or twelve months, but if a labourer was brought 10,000 miles at great expense, naturally they had to make an agreement to serve for a longer period, because it would not pay to bring men such a long distance for short periods like six months. Therefore it was perfectly reasonable that the yellow men should be engaged for three years and the black men for only one year. He wished to point out that the black men were confined to the compounds and had poorer food without having any more pay than the Chinese, and therefore they were working under considerably poorer conditions than the yellow men. If it were true that servility or any conditions approaching slavery existed he was right in his statement that there were more people existing in the Transvaal under those conditions now than when the present Government came into office. It was said that they all knew that the Government had signed this new Ordinance continuing the conditions he had referred to for two and a half years. All he could say was that he had no idea of it himself, and he was in the habit of reading most of the news from South Africa. It had been stated that in the month of September some reference was made to this question, but probably many of them did not read their papers so diligently at that time, and in December he saw nothing whatever about it. He would have thought such a thing as that would have been notified to them in some way, but until the late Colonial Secretary mentioned it to-day he was absolutely ignorant that the new Ordinance had been signed and was in force. It was quite sufficient for him to say that at any rate there were some hon. Members whose attention was not brought to the fact that that Ordinance had been sanctioned by the present Government and was to be continued for two and a half years. He agreed that some regulations were necessary as long as Chinese were kept in South Africa, but it ought to be remembered that the supporters of the present Government promised to send the Chinese back.

MR. CHURCHILL: Never.

MR. FELL said that that had been stated on every platform in the country in the electioneering speeches of hon. Members opposite.

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, but not before the contracts expired.

MR. FELL said it was placarded all over the country that the Government would immediately put a stop to Chinese labour, and every speech was to that effect. It was not said that the Chinese were going to be replaced by black men but by white men; that was stated at the election. What was the result? When the present Government came into office there were 1,000 more white men working in the mines than at the present time. It should not be overlooked that it required three black men to take the place of two Chinamen. From that it would at once be seen that by sending the Chinese back the mortality would be enormously increased. Suffering would be enormously increased by this change in policy on the part of the Government, and it would create a death-roll such as would never have occurred under the Chinese system, because the death-rate amongst the blacks were 50 per cent. more than amongst the Chinese.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to say that the death-rate was twenty per thousand. Nearly 5,000 Chinese had been repatriated as physically unfit, and when a Chinamen fell sick he was sent back home.

MR. FELL thought the last figure of the mortality amongst the Chinese showed it was sixteen per thousand, whilst the mortality amongst natives was thirty-two, which was just double. Therefore, he was right in asserting that the suffering in the Transvaal mines owing to change of policy on the part of the Government had been materially increased by hurrying away the yellow men and replacing them by the black men, who were not so well fitted for the work and were dying off like flies. Many of the least fitted Chinamen for the work had been sent back to China, and it was admitted that there had never been so good a body of labourers for the work as at present existed amongst the Chinamen now in the compounds, and nowhere was there less crime amongst men working under those conditions. The blacks who had taken the place of the Chinamen came mostly from the low-lying swamps, and consequently the death-rate would be very great indeed. With the greater care that was now being taken in the compounds he hoped the death-rate among the blacks would improve, but it would always continue higher than in the case of the

Chinese. He repeated that he was perfectly ignorant that this Chinese Ordinance had been re-enacted, and had he known it was going to be signed, he would certainly have asked some Questions as to its nature and whether more servile conditions were to be imposed than under the old Ordinance. They had been deprived of that opportunity because they knew nothing about the matter. The country was now beginning to know all about it. He attended a meeting in the country not long ago, and when the question of Chinese slavery was mentioned there was a roar of laughter, and people in the audience said they knew about the fraud that was practised in connection with that matter at the general election.

MR. MOND (Chester) said that hon. Members on that side of the House were at a loss to understand the position taken up by the Opposition on this question. The hon. Member for Great Yarmouth and his friends still entertained a lingering tenderness and regard for the Chinese coolie; they were losing him with regret. Indeed it was probable that, if they were returned to power, as the Transvaal Goverment would not have him, they would introduce the Chinese coolie into England so as not to lose their old friend altogether. It was the white people of the Transvaal who refused to have the Chinese among them any more; they were tired of the system forced upon them for the benefit of the mining magnates. One of the gravest accusations brought against the late Government was that they gave the white people of the Transvaal no opportunity whatsoever of saying whether or not they wanted Chinese labour. As soon as they had the opportunity, they said the Chinese must go; and now the Chinese were going. The Liberal Party was charged on the one hand with turning them out too quickly and on the other with turning them out at all. They could not have it both ways. Let the Opposition say frankly whether they wished to keep the Chinese in South Africa or not. Under the policy of the present Government they were going rapidly. In about eighteen months there would not be one left. What would have happened if the Conservative Government had remained in office? The Chinese would have doubled in number and they would have been rivetted round the necks of the white population, who would not have had representative government. No Liberal had expected that when the Liberal Government came into power they would turn the Chinese out by a stroke of the pen. Their pledge was that at the end of their contracts the Chinese would go, and that pledge the Government had carried out. To have broken contracts and repatriated the Chinese at once would have inflicted serious hardship. That would not have been statesmanlike. Would hon. Gentlemen opposite have allowed the Chinese to run about the Transvaal? If not, how could they blame the Government for carrying out the only sensible policy open to them? These charges of breach of faith, of pledges given to the House being broken, and of breaches of personal honour, came in a curious way from hon. Gentlemen opposite. They were not the judges of the pledges given by Liberal leaders to their own party. If their opponents were incapable of understanding simple English, that was not their fault. They were not responsible for the intellectual development of their opponents. Hon. Gentlemen would be more profitaby occupied in trying to find out the meaning of the pledges their own leader had given on tariff reform, than in interfering between the Liberal leaders and their followers. No Liberal Member had asserted that Chinese labour would be entirely replaced by white labour, but what they said on the authority of experienced people was that certainly more white labour would be employed, and was being employed. They were quite ready to fight another election on this co-called fraud. Let hon. Gentlemen opposite go to their constituencies and say: "We are prepared to introduce Chinese labour under the 1904 Ordinance into England." Liberals would be prepared to fight them on that issue, and would beat them as they did last time.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said the hon. Member for Chester had asked whether they would bring the Chinese into this country. Under this Government there had been Chinese introduced into this country.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. There is nothing in this Bill about introducing Chinese or anybody else into England; and hon. Members must, therefore, confine their remarks to affairs in South Africa.

MR. HUNT said he understood from that ruling that he must not answer the question of the hon. Member opposite in regard to introducing Chinese into this country. He would remind hon. Gentlemen that one of the great points in the last election had reference to Chinese labour, and the question of compounds. Coloured labourers were now in compounds in South Africa, so that the charges made against the late Government as to Chinese being kept in compounds fell to the ground. As a matter of fact, the restrictions in connection with the compounds at the Kimberley mines were very much more severe for black men than for Chinamen. In his own constituency at the general election, the Chinese question was run very heavily indeed. All over the place there were pictures of Chinamen with chains on their necks. That was the way the election was won by their opponents. Hon. Gentlemen opposite made a point of the charge that the Chinese were so badly treated that they wanted to get back to their own country; but it would be remembered that Lord Selborne said that the Chinamen were so satisfied with their work in South Africa that there would be a riot if they were sent back. He reminded the Under-Secretary for the Colonies that during that outcry about the way the Chinamen were treated the Government entered into the New Hebrides Convention, and in answer to a Question which he put it was admitted that a girl of twelve years of age could be treated considerably worse than the Chinamen in South Africa. He asked the House whether political humbug could go any further than that? Were not the Liberals ashamed of themselves? [AN HON. MEMBER:—"They ought to be."] No doubt they ought to be; for to a great extent they won the general election on the pretence that grown-up Chinamen were badly treated—men who were only too glad to get into South Africa if allowed to go—while they compelled girl children at the will of what they called their barbarous, man-eating chief, to serve indentures to work for fifteen or sixteen hours a day with very little food, and really under more servile conditions than the Chinese worked under in South Africa. That was the Liberal Party's idea of morality and the way they treated subject races.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) said that the hon. Member for Ludlow had stated what was a very common fallacy amongst hon. Gentlemen opposite and those who agreed with them in regard to Chinese labour. He only spoke for himself, but he could say that from the moment he read the Ordinance he had an objection to the amount of restriction which was put on the Chinaman. They knew that Chinamen were Orientals, and indulged in Oriental vices under Oriental conditions. White men had to be protected against these vices; and one was prepared for compounds. One knew that the Chinamen's wages were low and that they worked hard, and he did not think that much objection was taken to the Chinamen on that ground. But the real, fundamental objection to the Ordinance was that not only did it protect the white man against the Chinaman's vices, but against his virtues. Because he was a Chinaman he was not allowed to compete with white men outside the compounds or to exercise his virtues. Therefore new crimes had to be invented for him. The Ordinance said to the Chinaman, "If you engage directly or indirectly in any labour except in unskilled labour in the mines, you shall be fined and imprisoned." What did that mean? It meant that if a Chinaman in his own time cultivated a little bit of garden—as only a Chinaman could do—

and if he sold a cabbage he would get three months in gaol, while the white man who bought it would be subjected to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of £100. If a Chinaman invested his savings in a small shop he got six months imprisonment and was fined £25.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): The Chinamen knew that.

MR. A. DEWAR said that the fundamental objection to the Ordinance and the difference between it and other Ordinances and the New Hebrides Convention was that the latter did not prohibit the indentured labours from exercising their virtues as the Chinese Ordinance in the Transvaal did. Let the House look at the position in this country. We sent our missionaries to China and we told the Chinese that it was their duty to exercise all the faculties which God had given them; but when these Chinese were brought across the seas to South Africa, if they exercised enterprise, and by thrift saved money and put it to exchange for land, or by their ingenuity made a Chinese puzzle for sale, they were put in prison and fined. He maintained that that was an impossible position for a British Government to be in; and that was why he objected to the Ordinance. The late Secretary of State for the Colonies had said that that was not slavery. Technically it was not slavery at all; but really it partook of the quality of slavery. [Opposition cries of "Oh," and "No."] Yes: when they did not allow a man to exercise his own faculties in his own time, that man was not free. The hon. Member for the City of London said that the Chinese knew it. At the general election he was asked, "What would you do?" These sort of questions were always asked by his opponents. "Would you at once put a stop to Chinese labour?" If one said "Yes," the retort would come, "What! Disorganise the whole industry of the Colony, and against the wishes of the Colonists?" So that avenue was closed. "Would you continue to allow something to go on that is not freedom?" That was another dilemma. The only answer that could be made was, "What could the Government do, except to put the decision in the hands of the people of the Transvaal themselves, when they were granted responsible Government." But the Chinese labour had got to be got rid of. The evil that men did lived after them, and the evil which the late Secretary for the Colonies did lived after him—politically. But the right hon. Gentleman had got up that day and in an impassioned speech blamed the Government because they did not get rid at once of his handiwork. He was quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman did not believe now the charge he had made against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, viz., of having made a solemn pledge to get rid of Chinese labour at once. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman now believed that what the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant was, "First of all let the Chinese work to the end of their contracts, and then prevent any new contracts being entered into." The contracts were in existence, and they had always said they must be worked out, and they could not be worked out unless that Ordinance was renewed.

MR. LYTTELTON was understood to say that the contracts could have been perfectly well worked out. If the parts of the Ordinance in the minds of the Government had been eliminated, the contracts could have been concluded.

MR. A. DEWAR said he thought not. Apart from the Ordinance the Chinamen had no right to be in South Africa. [OPPOSITION cries of "Yes."] The Chinamen were brought into South Africa under the Ordinance, and their rights when there were regulated by the Ordinance. Did hon. Gentlemen opposite say that the Chinamen could come into the Transvaal and roam where they liked? Did hon. Gentlemen suggest that the Chinamen should have freedom to buy land or to engage in trade or skilled industries? Did hon. Gentlemen suggest now that the Government should have gone back on the Ordinance and said to the existing Chinamen brought in under contract that they were left free? Surely not. The pledge given by the Government was that the contracts should be worked out and any further importation prevented. He thought the charge against the Government had fallen to pieces. He was quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman now believed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that no more Chinamen would be allowed in; and he thought that that pledge was very likely to be kept. The right hon. Gentleman should recognise that the Government had some merit in the matter, because 10,000 Chinamen had left the Transvaal within a year, and within two years all the Chinamen would have gone. He thought that hon. Gentlemen opposite had made the most of this question from every point of view, and that they had not succeeded that evening in their object. They would not say what they would have the Government do. It was all very well to accuse the Liberal Government, in exceedingly difficult circumstances of not having kept the letter of what they called a pledge. But the Government had kept the spirit of it and they had kept faith with the country.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the hon. Member for South Edinburgh had made a very ingenious defence, but when analysed and looked at closely it would not hold water. The hon. Member said first of all that during the general election all that the Radical Party did was to say that the Chinamen could not be sent back until their contracts had expired; and that those contracts would not be renewed. He dared say that the hon. Gentleman made that pledge, but that was not the pledge made at his election. On the contrary, they were told during that election that slavery existed and that that slavery was to be terminated as soon as the Liberal Party came into power. That was said in his constituency, and so far as he could learn after consultation with his friends, that was said all over the country. Therefore he thought that the experience of the hon. Gentleman was the exception which proved the rule. As to the general point which the hon. Gentleman had made, he thought he could not have read the Ordinance. The Government when they came into office might not have renewed the Ordinance at all and allowed Chinamen to remain in South Africa as free men, or they might have allowed them to continue there under modified conditions, but they had not done either of those things, because they had allowed them to remain there for two-and-a-half years under the very conditions to which the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members opposite objected, and with which the country rang at the last general election. The hon. Gentleman could not get out of that. He had listened with astonishment to the speech of the hon. Member for Chester; it was not relevant to the subject, and it was an exemplification of the debates which took place two years ago, and of the extraordinary statements which hon. Members then made on the subject. He understood the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent to say that if the Unionist Party would promise to repeal the Ordinance when they had an opportunity he would vote for them if they divided. But the hon. Member had quite missed the point of the whole debate. They did not say that they had done anything wrong in enacting the Ordinance. On the contrary, they said that the exceptional condition of the Transvaal at the time compelled them to enact it; but what they complained of was that the right hon. Gentleman, in criticising their enactment of the Ordinance, stated that it imposed slavery, but having come into power, had followed their example and continued it. The hon. Member said the only policy to pursue was to get rid of the Ordinance.

MR. JOHN WARD: You ought not to have started it.

SIR F. BANBURY said it would be out of order if he were to go into that question, but what he was calling attention to was that while Ministerialists complained of their passing the Ordinance they were continuing it. That was the whole point of difference between them. He really could not conceive the view of the hon. Member for South Edinburgh. He had talked a good deal about breach of contract if the Ordinance was altered. Were they to understand that the great Liberal Party would sanction slavery, if it involved a breach of contract to end it? He would like the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies to inform him whether the Convention for the New Hebrides allowed recruiting for New Caledonia, and whether during the last three months any alteration had been made concerning the employment of child labour under the New Hebrides Convention. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman could give them some explanation on that point.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to say that he could only reply to the hon. Member's Questions by the permission of the House, as he had already spoken. It was unnecessary to discuss the New Hebrides question because they had laid a Paper on the Table, which gave the fullest details.

SIR F. BANBURY wished to know whether the right hon. Gentleman would answer his question.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to reply that the question of child labour in the New Hebrides had been the subject of further regulation under the Convention, which had been further developed in regard to it. This subject was discussed at the beginning of last session, and regulations had since been issued by the French Government to their Commissioners fixing the height of children to ensure that they should not be engaged until they were fully grown. It was impossible to ascertain the age exactly. This provision was claimed to have the effect of ensuring that the Convention would be applied in such a way as to prevent children being recruited and working before the age of fifteen.

MR. JOHN WARD inquired if he understood that they were not to work until they were fifteen.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to reply that they were not to be engaged until they were of a reasonable age and fully grown and developed in the opinion of the officers, so as to be able to do the work which they were engaged to do. These were the instructions which the French Government had given to their Commissioners in the New Hebrides, and they had made the regulations more stringent and effective with regard to child labour. Then as regarded New Caledonia, before the Convention the French Government had the right to recruit natives for service in New Caledonia, and after the Convention they had that right, and no Convention they could enter into was likely to affect it. But as a matter of fact they had issued a number of regulations making that traffic much more restricted. They had forbidden altogether the enlistment of women and children, except when accompanying the head of their families, and he should say the extent of recruiting for employment in New Caledonia was very small — 200 or 300 a year. That was the only place except Fiji where this system of recruiting was allowed, and in the latter place it only existed to the extent of ten or twelve persons a year. So far as the French Government were concerned we could not invade their rights as a sovereign Power in that respect, but he was bound to say that he thought if the hon. Baronet would read the new Article he could not fail to be impressed by the care which had been shown and the high standard displayed. As the question had been raised he would like to say that he quite recognised that the Parliamentary attention which had been given to the subject had resulted in more careful labour regulations being drawn up than were included in the original Convention. Those regulations would, he thought, be in accordance with the general view and wishes of the House. The document which had been laid on the Table was well worth reading, and was a welcome and attractive exhibition of the good feeling and international co-operation existing between the two countries who were parties to the Convention.

SIR F. BANBURY said he had hoped the right hon. Gentleman would have given him an answer "yes" or "no," but he was very much obliged to him for replying as he had done.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said the hon. Member for Chester after saying that he would address the House in simple English, had asked what the Government should really have done; and if he might reply from that side of the House in simple English, he would say that the Government should have kept their word; but that was a solution which did not appeal to the hon. Member for Chester, or to many other hon. Members on that side of the House. He could not help being struck by the remarkable speech of the hon. Member for South Edinburgh. The hon. Member had said that technically the Ordinance partook of the character of slavery, and that the promise that no more Chinese would be introduced into the Transvaal was very likely to be kept. That was a curious kind of defence of a Government policy. The defence of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies was characterised by great ability and almost more than his usual audacity. The right hon. Gentleman had tried to divert the attention of the House from the point before it, to throw dust in the eyes of hon. Members, by talking about black and yellow labour, and thus to obliterate the very serious charge made by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square.

MR. JOHN WARD: He has withdrawn the charge.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said the right hon. Gentleman had not done so in his hearing. The charge of his right hon. friend was that, after all the bitter denunciation of Chinese labour during the past few years, the Government which professed to get rid of that labour at the earliest possible moment, had consented to renew the Ordinance for two and a half years, with all the conditions of slavery which attached to it and which had been depicted by hon. Members below the gangway opposite far more eloquently than the facts of the case justified. After all the abuse and obloquy they had poured upon it, it was a curious thing that the Party opposite should actually have sanctioned a renewal of the Ordinance for a period of two and a half years, without the least necessity being laid upon them for so doing and without the knowledge of the House. He believed the hon. Member for the Abercromby Division disputed that it was without the knowledge of the House. All he could say was that it was without the knowledge of Members on the Opposition side of the House, who otherwise would have raised the question.

COLONEL SEELY said the question was raised on 21st August last.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said that was before the renewal of the Ordinance, as the hon. and gallant Member knew quite well. The fact was that the Party which floated into power by vilifying its opponents in regard to that Ordinance, which pledged itself to put an end to Chinese labour at the earliest possible moment, and which considered it necessary after being in power for two years to renew that Ordinance, did, by so doing, break faith with the country and the House. If the Government thought such a policy as that would pay, they were mistaken. They would find it fail in a very short time.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) thought the charge against the Government arose from a confusion of two things. One was Chinese labour itself, and the other was the Ordinance for Chinese labour. Chinese labour was the fact of introducing that labour into the Colony. The Ordinance laid down the conditions under which it was introduced. One or two speakers had suggested that it was possible that the conditions of Chinese labour might have been allowed, and continued without the Ordinance, and that, therefore, the action of the Government was inconsistent. He wished to point out with regard to that charge, and he knew that he was voicing the views of a great many of the Liberal Party, that their objection was to Chinese labour itself, and not to the conditions of the Ordinance. He asserted that the bulk of the Liberal Party would have objected to Chinese labour unless it was guarded by these conditions. They objected entirely to the introduction of this alien element, but, if it must be introduced, then they demanded that it should be guarded by the most stringent conditions while it remained. He knew something about these compounds and about the feeling of the people of South Africa, and he spoke their views when he said they would never have listened for a moment to the introduction of Chinese labour, unless it was safeguarded by these conditions. The right hon. Gentleman opposite thought there was something alarmingly inconsistent in their agreeing to Chinese labour and to the conditions of this Ordinance, but the view of the Liberal Party was that if Chinese labour must continue it must be guarded by such conditions.

MR. T. L. CORBETT asked was not the hon. Gentleman aware that if the Ordinance had not been renewed the Chinese would have been sent home.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, no. If the Ordinance had not been renewed the effect would have been that the Chinese would simply have settled in the country.

MR. HARWOOD said that if the hon. Gentleman doubted it let him have regard to the feeling of the people of Australia in reference to Chinese labour and to the feeling of America in regard to Japanese labour. Both peoples said that if it was introduced it must be so guarded that the labourers should not mix with the people of the country. It would be nothing less than a disaster if these Chinese were allowed to merge into the general population. Hon Members opposite brought the Chinese to South Africa; they brought to that country a population which could not be allowed there except under conditions practically of slavery. They now said the Liberal Party had been false to their pledges. He could tell the House that the feeling of Lancashire was a feeling of anger not at the conditions of the Ordinance, but at the introduction of Chinese labour at all. They objected, of course, to the conditions of the Ordinance, because that labour could not be introduced except under conditions which practically amounted to slavery. That was not inconsistent. It was simply a business matter. The Government had to decide whether they should send the Chinese labour back at once or whether it should be allowed to run out its contract. They had to do one of two things. If they had sent the labour back at once they would have dislocated the trade of the country in a way that would be unjust to a struggling Colony. It would have been more heroic perhaps, but infinitely more foolish.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said the hon. Member admitted, then, that the renewal of the Ordinance kept the Chinese there two years more.

MR. HARWOOD said he did not admit that, but what he did admit was that if these men must be kept there they could only be kept under the conditions of the Ordinance. The Government had to decide whether the Chinese should break their contract or be allowed to run it out, and, if the latter, under what conditions. Certainly not under the condition of freedom, which would allow them to merge into the population of the country. If they had done that these men would probably have made the Transvaal a yellow country in a short time. If they did not do that they had to allow the contracts to run out so that the labourers might be gradually replaced by other labour, and if they allowed it to remain they must guard it by such conditions as the Ordinance laid down. What they said was that they should get rid of Chinese labour, but so long as they kept it, they must keep it under conditions which safeguarded the country.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said he was in the memory of the House when he asserted that often as this question had been debated in the House it had never been debated from the point of view taken by the hon. Member who had just sat down. He was convinced that most of the hon. Gentleman's colleagues were made uncomfortable at what he had said regarding the question. He (Sir Henry Craik) happened, he believed, to be the only Member in the House who had heard the whole of the debates in that House, and also the whole of the debates in the Legislative Assembly at Pretoria, in 1903. He had never until now heard a single argument on Chinese labour urged from benches opposite which bore the slightest resemblance to the arguments urged in the Legislative Assembly at Pretoria. The only hon. Member whose arguments had approached those of the Colonial Assembly was the hon. Member who had just sat down. The ignorance among some hon. Members on the question was singular. The hon. Member for Bolton had told them that the Ordinance alone had brought the Chinese to South Africa. But before the Ordinance was passed they could have brought into South Africa any number of Chinamen. The argument used in the Assembly at Pretoria was this, "Introduce as many Chinamen as you like if you place them under the severest restrictions; but we know what the result of those restrictions will be; they will drive a coach and six through them, and before you know where you are the Chinamen will be in possession of all the small trade of the country." That was the objection taken in the Legislative Assembly at Pretoria. There was another argument used in that Assembly, and it was one which would surprise hon. Members opposite. It was this, "Why introduce Chinese labour? You have an ample supply of labour in South Africa. It does not depend on their will whether they come in or not; they have to work, and they ought to be required to work." These arguments would be rather startling, would they not, in the House of Commons? One of the Members of the Pretoria Assembly put the strange inquiry why, if they had any difficulty in obtaining native labour, they did not confer with the chiefs. To confer with the chiefs in order to obtain native labour was so palpably a euphemism for slave dealing that it really proved too much for the Legislative Assembly at Pretoria. But after all the insults which hon. Members opposite had thrown at the late Government, after all the attacks which they had made upon their predecessors, what had they done to end this Chinese labour in the course of two and a half years? He had heard plenty of discussion on this subject in the Transvaal in 1903, and he thought he was within the mark when he said that it was contemplated that the system of Chinese labour was only to last some eight, nine, or ten years. It was to be a temporary and not a permanent measure. No one contemplated anything like what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken of, that the Chinese were brought into South Africa as a permanent means of labour. Restrictions were placed upon that labour in deference to South African wishes. Those restrictions were obviously inconsistent with the permanent employment of such labour. What had the Government done? They were to bring Chinese labour to an end in two and a half years, which would be 1911, or about eight years from the time when Chinese labour was introduced, and about the period it was contemplated that it would continue by the late Government. The present Government had re-enacted those restrictions which were enacted in accordance with the wishes of the South African people; they were continuing those restrictions for two and a half years, which would bring the period for the employment of Chinese to not much less than that originally contemplated when it was introduced, and they were applying to that labour exactly the restrictions which were approved by their predecessors, but which had formed the subject of such lavish denunciations by hon. Gentlemen opposite throughout the country. What were the accusations which the Government had brought against the late Government, and what action did those accusations lay upon them as honest men? Had they acted up to the spirit of their pronunciations? Had they washed their hands completely of what they had asserted was nothing less than the introduction of slavery into British dominions?

*MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that although the right hon. Gentleman had made the best case he could for the Convention with regard to the New Hebrides, yet he thought that it had been patent to all his hearers that under the provisions to which the present Government had given their adhesion together with the French Government, an appalling state of things was extremely likely to arise. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had said that, in regard to native labour in South Africa, to confer with the chiefs would be palpably like slave dealing; but there was no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman knew quite well what it meant when the Secretary for the Colonies agreed to allow to be embodied in the Convention with France a similar expression, "to confer with the chiefs." Where young girls and young boys were not allowed to be indentured, then the recruiters could confer with the chiefs. They knew pretty well what that would mean, and, if the right hon. Gentleman did not know, at any rate he ought to have known that he could not put his hand to any such instrument as that. They had been assured in every part of the country at the time of the general election that they did not object to the Chinese as Chinese, but that they objected to their being employed under conditions which they said were slavery. There could be no doubt on the part of anyone who really gave a thought to the matter, that the Government ought to have brought Chinese labour to an end, after all their professions and speeches, *coute que coute.* After their professions and speeches the Government and their supporters were in duty bound to make such arrangements as would cause the Chinese to go out of South Africa. They on that side of the House had not taken up that attitude. An endeavour had been made to show that they were bound hand and foot to the employment of the Chinese. That did not seem at all to be the case. If a Unionist Government had been in office at the present time the Chinese would now be going out of South Africa.

They had got them for the purpose of ensuring that the mines would be worked. Everybody knew that the natives would not then work. They were full of wages after the war; they purchased more wives and settled down at home until their money ran out. The work had to be done or the mines stopped, and therefore the Chinese were employed. For the general welfare of the country, the late Government had employed the Chinese, but only temporarily; they had no need to apologise for their presence. Under the Unionist Government the Chinese would certainly have been sent home when the need for their presence in South Africa had come to an end, as was the case at the present time. Now there was an abundant supply of native labour, and the Chinese being no longer required they would have been repatriated under a Unionist Government; and, after the professions which had been made on Liberal platforms, the Chinese ought to have been repatriated at all costs at the present moment, from the point of view of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The charge against the present Government was that they had failed to veto the renewal of the Ordinance, and it was to be regretted that after their professions throughout the country, and after their high moral tone and aspirations, the Government should have been found putting their hand to the abominable Convention in connection with the New Hebrides, the outcome of which could not be otherwise than more or less fatal to the population. The right hon. Gentleman had sheltered himself behind the thought that they were so few. What had the fact that the numbers might be relatively small to do with it? The principle underlying the action of the Government and the responsibility which must and always would devolve upon them was exactly the same whether it referred to large or small numbers. If the whole question was a small one it was all the more necessary and all the easier for them to arrange a Convention such as would ensure the safety of the population committed more or less to their charge. If the number had been great it would not have modified their responsibility in any sense. There was a great deal that was absolutely artificial in the charges brought against his right hon. friends with reference to Chinese labour. He had no doubt that if a Radical Government had been in office at the time the difficulty arose they would have taken somewhat similar steps to ensure that the Transvaal mines and the great industry upon which the welfare of that entire country depended were safeguarded by the introduction of temporary labour such as was introduced by the Unionist Party.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes after Eight o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 24th March, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies [h.l.].

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for additional provision in the following Bill:—Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas [h.l.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [h.l.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [h.l.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [h.l.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [h.l.]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [h.l.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill; Derby Gas Bill; Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, and read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST, SMYRNA).

The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 15) Warrant, 1908, dated 12th February, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [h.l.].

The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit until further order. [No. 35.]

COUNTY COURTS BILL [h.l.].

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Loreburn): My Lords, I desire to introduce again this year a Bill to amend the law relating to County Courts. It is the same Bill that passed through this House last year, but unfortunately did not get any further. I beg to move that the Bill be read a first time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1^a."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 36.]

THE LATE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (The Marquess of Ripon): My Lords, I venture to ask your Lordships to allow me to interpose for a few moments before we proceed to the discussion of the public business on the Paper in order that I may express, as I am sure I may, on behalf not only of myself and my colleagues, but also of your Lordships' House, the deep sorrow and regret with which we have learned this morning of the death of one of the foremost Members of the House—the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke of Devonshire occupied a great position in this House and in this country for many years, but that position was due not so much to his ancient lineage or his historic name, nor yet to his great territorial possessions, as to the deep impression he made on his countrymen by the character which he always bore. If we look back to those now somewhat distant days when, in 1864 I think it was, the Duke of Devonshire first entered upon official life, and when I was first associated with him—he was Under-Secretary at the War Department at that time—and watch the course of his career down to the present moment, I must say that we shall consider that we are only expressing what will turn out to be the general feeling of the country when we pay every possible respect to his memory.

My Lords, it was the fate of the Duke of Devonshire during his career to be associated with men of various political opinions; but all of us, whether we were his colleagues or his opponents, were always, I am confident, ready to admit, to acknowledge, and to admire the perfect integrity of his conduct. The Duke of Devonshire had no personal objects to pursue. He was animated throughout his public life by no petty or personal ambitions; but, as we all believe, aye, and as we all know, by an earnest and conscientious desire to promote what he in his conscience believed to be for the best interests of his country. Therefore it is that we do but voice the public opinion of the land when we express to-night the sense which we feel that there has been taken from us under the providence of God one of the most eminent of our Members. It was not so much by gifts of eloquence, it was not so much by the commanding qualities which some statesmen possess, that the Duke of Devonshire exercised his influence over his countrymen. It was rather because every man felt the strongest conviction of the straightforward sincerity of his public life. Therefore I feel, though I am little fitted at this moment to discharge this duty, that I should have failed in what your Lordships would have expected of me if I had not made these observations.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble Marquess who leads the House has expressed in thoughtful and appropriate words sentiments which are felt not only in all parts of this House, but, I venture to say, in all parts of the country. We who sit on these benches greatly appreciate his testimony to the many great qualities by which the late Duke of Devonshire was distinguished. I am reluctant to add much to what the noble Marquess has said for many reasons, which, I think, your Lordships will understand. If one can imagine such a thing, one might almost say that the Duke of Devonshire himself would not have wished this occasion to be one for any elaborate panegyric. But, my Lords, how much might be said, if this were the occasion to say it, of his long and useful public career; how much might be said of his services in the House of Commons, in which he led his party during times of great difficulty and when critical problems were engaging the attention of that Assembly; how much might be said of the services which he rendered in this House, where, as the noble Marquess truly said, he was always regarded as one of its foremost Members. But what, I think, most engages our thoughts at this moment is that inflexible integrity, that simplicity of character, which so eminently distinguished him, and to which the noble Marquess so well bore witness. I doubt whether we are yet in a position to estimate correctly the place which will be assigned to the Duke of Devonshire by those who will write the history of the age in which he lived. He owed that position not to any particular achievement on which you can put your finger, not to any great measures on the Statute-book which will hereafter be associated with his name, not even to his ability as a speaker in Parliament or on the platform. His speeches, indeed, held the attention of those who listened to him, not so much on account of his eloquence as because of his invariable fairness and his ability to do justice to the arguments of those who differed from him. The place of the Duke of Devonshire will, I think, belong to him because he embodied in an eminent degree characteristics which in the opinion of the people of this country most entitle a public man to the admiration of his fellow citizens: uprightness of character, fearlessness of temperament, and that strong common sense and caution which so peculiarly distinguished him. It was the possession of these qualities that gained for the Duke of Devonshire the esteem of his countrymen; and, because he possessed them in so high a degree, I doubt whether any Englishman ever had a much stronger hold upon the confidence of all classes in the community. Of the Duke of Devonshire's personal qualities I cannot trust myself to speak. Those who, like the noble Marquess and myself, have enjoyed his friendship and have worked with him as colleagues, are aware how well he knew how to engage not only the respect but the affection of those who were brought into contact with him. My Lords, we on this side of the House thank the noble Marquess for the generous words which have fallen from him.

EARL ROSEBERY: My Lords, I ought perhaps to apologise for intruding on your attention to-night when the two Leaders of the House have spoken so well of the character of our late friend. But it seems to me seemly that there should be a voice raised from the bench which he himself occupied and from one who was associated with him for many years, though perhaps not nearly so long as the noble Marquess opposite. I would add what may seem a jarring note. I did hope and expect, though I do not know the precedents, that this House would be moved to adjourn to-day as a mark of respect for the late Duke. Our business is not so pressing that it could not wait for twenty-four hours, and as the only token of respect which we can show to the man who died this morning it would be, it seems to me, a fitting and not an excessive tribute to pay to him. If no one else will move the adjournment, I shall do so when I sit down. I am sure that it was with a bitter pang that all your Lordships read the sudden and terrible news this afternoon of the Duke of Devonshire's death. I was returning from a Committee of which the Duke was a member, and in which, though his illness did not permit him to take part in its deliberations, he felt a deep and sensible interest. It is not for me to-night to speak of him as a friend. He was the friend of many here. No more loyal, no more honest, no more unselfish and devoted friend could any man have. Nor is it my purpose to speak of his position in the various relations of life which he was called upon to fill. He was the best and most generous of landlords; he was a high-minded, enthusiastic sportsman; he was a devoted husband; he was kind to all with whom business or society brought him in contact; and he was the most magnificent of hosts. But there have been many in his high position who have been all these things, and many who have shared with him the title in which I think he would have taken the most pride—that of being an English gentleman. More than that, he was one of the great reserve forces of this country. He had filled many offices with great capacity and great industry. Injustice was done, I think, both to his capacity and to his industry by those who did not know him. But it is not even on that that I wish so much to dwell. He was no orator. I do not know any man who spoke with so much previous anguish or so much misery at the time as the late Duke of Devonshire. His speeches were not always enthralling to listen to, though they were listened to with veneration and respect. They were read all over the country as the speeches of no other private person were read, and were read for their close argument and reasoning power. We could have spared a dozen more facile rhetoricians for one speaker such as the Duke of Devonshire. What was conspicuous in him, as has been noticed by my noble friend behind me, was the transparent simplicity, candour, and directness of his character. He had reticences, but they were the reticences of shyness and not of subterfuge. When the Duke discussed any public question with any friends you felt that he was trying to divest himself of prejudices, trying to arrive at the truth and the kernel of the matter, and that, even if he had to change his opinion in the course of discussion, which he was not ashamed to do, he arrived at a conclusion which he believed to be right, and adhered to it against all odds and in all circumstances. It is men of that kind that form the glory of our country. We have many statesmen who occupy high office or who have occupied high office; and other countries have these. But few countries have men of high capacity, with every temptation to sloth, who devote themselves to the service of their country without the slightest ultimate personal object or ambition. That was the Duke of Devonshire's proud position, and it was for that reason, I think, that the country always sought his judgement and opinion on current events, and why he will leave after him a memory which even men of more conspicuous genius have failed to bequeath. He bore a proud name. There was no prouder name in this House than the name of the Duke of Devonshire. His forefathers have rendered at various times inestimable service to the State; but I greatly question whether in all that long and illustrious line any one of the Dukes or of the Cavendishes will have left a name more trusted and beloved, more justly trusted and more justly beloved, than that Duke whom we mourn to-day. My Lords, I am in your hands, but I desire to move the adjournment of the House.

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Earl Rosebery.*)

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I did not think when I spoke a short time ago of taking the step which has been taken by my noble friend, of moving the adjournment of the House, because as far as I had been able to ascertain I did not think it would be in accordance with precedent to do so. I think on an occasion of this kind, when we are striving to do unanimous honour to a member of this House just deceased, it is better to follow precedents that have been set than to strike out a new course. But as the noble Lord has thought fit to move the adjournment of the House, it seems to me that we should be wanting, or might be supposed to be wanting, in respect to the memory of the Duke of Devonshire if we did not assent to the Motion.

On Question, agreed to *nemine dissentiente.*

House adjourned at ten minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 24*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH)

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [Lords.]

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Stockport Corporation Bill (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed.

City of Glasgow Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Police and Sanitary Committee.—Ordered, That the Committee of Selection do nominate Three additional Members to serve on the Police and Sanitary Committee."—(*Mr. Burns.*)

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill—Reported from the Police and Sanitary Committee, with Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Leeds Corporation Bill. — Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B).

Sir HENRY KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group B. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at Twelve of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Madras Railway Company (Annuities) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled "An Act to make provision for dealing with the arrears of dividend on the preferred shares of the Inter-oceanic Railway of Mexico (Acapulco to Vera Cruz), Limited; and for the increase and rearrangement of the capital of the company; and for other purposes." [Inter-oceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the water limits of the Council and to enlarge their powers in various respects; and for other purposes." [Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords.]

And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision with reference to the substitution of a memorandum and articles of association for the existing constitution and regulations of the Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, and for extending its objects, and to repeal The Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, Act, 1886, The Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, Act, 1890, and The Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, Act, 1900; and for other purposes." [Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords.]

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [Lords]; Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords]. Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL (JUVENILE SMOKING CLAUSES).

Petition from Woodford and other places, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (NO. 2) BILL.

Petition from Swansea, against; to lie upon the Table.

ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION DON) BILL.

Petition from Westminster, against; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Walton-on-Thames, against; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from West Riding of Yorkshire, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation; From Leicester; Madeley; and Stratford and West Ham; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From All Cannings and other places; Cirencester; Devizes; Devizes, Seend and Melksham; Lechlade; and Weymouth; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Bainbridge (four); Bolton (four); Brompton; Canterbury (four); Enfield; Helensburgh; Northallerton (five); Nottingham; Portsmouth; Redcar; and Streatham Hill; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING)

Petition from Brora, for prevention; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Leicester; and Worksop; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Copy presented, of Returns of Accidents and Casualties as reported to the Board of Trade by the several Railway Companies in the United Kingdom during the three months ended 31st December, 1907, together with Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade upon certain Accidents which were inquired into; Part I., Return of Accidents [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No.

15) Warrant, 1908, dated 12th February, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TROPICAL DISEASES RESEARCH FUND.

Copy presented, of Report of the Advisory Committee for the Tropical Diseases Research Fund for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRICES OF EXPORTED COAL.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th February; *Mr. David Alfred Thomas*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 97.]

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Inquiry into Charities (Administrative County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 26th July, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 98.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Licences Extinguished in Devonshire.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he can state the names of the public houses in Devonshire extinguished under the Act of 1904, the total amount of compensation awarded in each case, and the amount paid thereout to each individual licence-holder.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I regret that I cannot undertake to obtain the information asked for as regards individual houses. The annual volumes of Licensing Statistics contain all the information which I can give in regard to the County of Devonshire, and I must refer my hon. friend to them. I have, however, had the following figures extracted for his convenience—

Statement showing the On-Licences extinguished with Compensation in each of the years 1905–6–7.

Devonshire (County Area and County Boroughs.)

Year.	Number and description of licences.	To licensee.	To other parties.	Total.
		£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
1907 - -	5 alehouses	258 10 0	4,685 6 6	4,943 16 6
	11 beerhouses	823 2 10	7,763 17 2	8,587 0 0
	16 —	1,081 12 10	12,449 3 8	13,530 16 6
1906 - -	12 alehouses	965 8 0	5,344 8 3	6,309 16 3
	9 beerhouses	635 10 0	5,267 10 0	5,903 0 0
	21 —	1,600 18 0	10,611 18 3	12,202 16 3
1905 - -	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total - -	37 —	2,682 10 10	23,061 1 11	25,733 12 9

Licensing Compensation under the Act of 1904.

MR. BERRIDGE (Warwick and Leamington): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what is the total annual amount of the compensation levy authorised by the Licensing Act of 1904, giving the figures separately for each licensing area, and distinguishing in cases where the amount authorised has only partially or has not been levied; and whether, if the foregoing information is not available, it would be possible to secure the same at an early date.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The information available on this subject is given in Table II. (*c*) of the Licensing Statistics for 1907, Cd. 3951, and in the corresponding tables in the volumes for previous years. It is estimated that if the maximum charges had been imposed in all cases in the year 1907 the total of £1,099,052 shown in Table II. (*c*) would have been increased by a sum of about £67,000.

Commercial Travellers and Bankruptcy Laws.

Mr. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been called to the disability suffered, under the present bankruptcy laws, by commercial travellers who are paid by commission and who, in the event of the firm employing them becoming bankrupt, are only entitled to rank as ordinary creditors and not, as is the case with commercial travellers paid by salary, as preferential creditors; and whether he can hold out any hope that he will introduce an Amendment to remedy this in any legislation he may introduce dealing with the amendment of the bankruptcy laws.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am advised that it is doubtful whether the disability suggested by my hon. friend exists under the present law, as judicially interpreted. I will, however, carefully consider whether any amendment of the law is necessary in the event of the introduction of a Bill to amend the Bankruptcy Acts.

Ships not Returned in the Annual Battle Practice Return.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether he will state the names of those ships which have not been returned in the Annual Battle Practice Return as having completed their annual practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) "Argonaut," "Arrogant," "Amphitrite," "Andromeda," "Africa," "Argyll," "Bonaventure," "Brilliant," "Cadmus," "Cressy," "Cæsar," "Charybdis," "Cambrian," "Cornwall," "Commonwealth," "Clio," "Diadem," "Dwarf," "Devonshire," "Drake," "Euryalus," "Eclipse," "Europa," "Flora," "Forte," "Good Hope," "Glory," "Goliath," "Hampshire," "Hogue," "Highflyer," "Hyacinth," "Hebe," "Hindustan," "Indefatigable," "Isis," "Lapwing," "Niobe," "Prince George," "Perseus," "Proserpine," "Pyramus," "Roxburgh," "Redbreast," "Sapphire," "Suffolk," "Shearwater," "Skipjack," "Speedwell," "Scylla," "Terrible," "Venerable," "Vindictive," "Warrior."

Note.—The above list includes both ships whose firing was delayed and ships which did not fire at all, owing to date of paying off, absence of umpiring committee, or other cause.

Prosecution of Mr. F. Persse.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the recent law proceedings at Gort when Mr. F. Persse, J.P., was prosecuted for unlawfully discharging firearms on the public road; under what Act were the proceedings instituted; and will he explain why Mr. Brady, resident magistrate, contrary to the expressed opinion of his brother magistrate who assisted on the occasion, marked the case dismissed, instead of, as is usual in all such cases, adjourned to next petty sessions.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The proceedings against Mr. F. Persse, J.P., were brought by the police under the Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Act, 1851. I am informed that one of the two magistrates was for a conviction and the other for an acquittal. In these circumstances it was open to the magistrates to make one or other of two orders, namely, to dismiss without prejudice to the complaint being renewed or to adjourn. The resident magistrate informs me that his fellow magistrates expressed no desire to adjourn the case, and the usual procedure in that court was therefore followed, that is to say, the case was dismissed without prejudice to the complaint being renewed if thought desirable.

Japan and Chinese Railways.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the attention of His Majesty's Government has been directed to the protest raised by the General Chamber of Commerce of Niuchwang against the attitude of Japan in forbidding the construction by China of the Hsinmintun-Fakumen Railway; is His Majesty's Government in possession of a copy of the alleged agreement by which Japan claims the right of vetoing the construction of that railway; was it received simultaneously with the receipt of the Chinese-Japanese treaty of 1905, and, if not, when was it received by His Majesty's Government, and does it bear the signature of the plenipotentiaries of the Chinese-Japanese treaty of 1905; and, if the alleged agreement does not bear these signatures, has it any validity.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. His Majesty's Government are in possession of the text of the clause of the protocol by which Japan claims the right of vetoing the construction of the Hsinmintun-Fakumen Railway. It runs as follows: "The Chinese Government engage, for the purpose of protecting the interest of the South Manchurian Railway, not to construct, prior to the recovery by them of the said railway, any main line in the neighbourhood of, and parallel to, that railway, or any branch line which might be prejudicial to the interest of the above-mentioned railway." This was communicated to His Majesty's Government in April, 1906, shortly after the treaty referred to by the right hon. Member. We are informed that the protocol bears the signatures of the Chinese representatives; there can be no doubt as to its validity.

Indian Railway Finance.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has under consideration the question of separating railway finance from the general finances of India in order that funds may be raised for the railway system, which returns over 5¾ per cent. on the capital invested, at a more favourable rate than 3½ per cent.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) There is no intention of adopting the policy which my hon. friend appears to have in mind, nor have I any reason to believe that its adoption would reduce the rate at which capital can be obtained for Indian railways.

Nationality of Indian Magistrates.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India could, without undue labour and expense, enter in the existing judicial statistics the nationalities of the presiding officers, in order that information may be readily available as to the quarter in which responsibility lies for the great majority of the decisions of the civil and magisterial courts in India, and as to the limited extent to which Europeans dispense justice between man and man in India.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I am not prepared to call upon the Government of India to introduce into the judicial statistics a complication which would undoubtedly add considerably to the labour of preparing them, without serving, in my opinion, any very useful purpose.

Scottish Fishing Rights.

MR. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state approximately what is the yearly income derived by landed proprietors in the Highlands and in the Lowlands, respectively, from the fishings in the streams, rivers, and lochs of Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) It is not possible to give, even approximately, a complete answer to my hon. friend, for in many districts it is impossible to separate angling from other sporting values. The assessable rentals of thirty-one river districts in which local fishery boards exist amount to about £117,000.

MR. MENZIES: To ask the Secretary for Scotland if, considering the interest and anxiety upon the subject of fishing rights in Scotland, especially in the Lowlands, it is his intention to introduce legislation, and, if so, when, which will clear up the existing state of uncertainty as to the law of Scotland upon this matter, and upon such matters as the powers of riparian proprietors to prohibit fishing for trout in streams and rivers, and the period of continuous free fishing by permission of the proprietor which would give a legal right to the people thereafter to fish without his permission.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) It was stated last session that this subject is not being lost sight of by the Government, but it is not possible for me now to make any statement as to the prospects of legislation.

Employment of Auxiliary Labour in the Post Office.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that, in Paragraph 53 of the Hobhouse Report, it was recommended that auxiliary labour should be limited as far as possible, and that persons working full time should not in future be engaged while suitable men having little or no employment are available; whether he has accepted this recommendation; and whether, seeing that recently men have been asked for to perform letter sorting in Liverpool, and engaged on the express understanding that they must be engaged outside the office, in regular employment, he will investigate the circumstances.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have not lost sight of the Committee's recommendation, with which I am in accord, and I am considering how far it is practicable to adopt it. I concur generally with the view that men in full-time employment outside the Post Office should not be employed as auxiliaries. I may say, at once, however, that in my opinion it is very undesirable to employ men who have no other employment on auxiliary duties which only occupy three or four hours a day. This principle was rightly applied in the case of certain men recently selected at Liverpool.

Wakefield Post Office Alterations and the Fair Wage Contract.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the firm of Higgins and Pashley, of Wakefield, who have secured the contract for an alteration to the Post Office in that town, have sub-let the carpenters' and joiners' work to a Mr. Lazenby, who does not pay the standard rate of wages; and whether he will take steps to compel this employer to observe the spirit and letter of the Fair Wages Clause.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) My consent has been asked for this sub-letting but, before granting it, I am making inquiries in order to satisfy myself that the Fair Wages Clause will be observed.

Case of Postman Slidders, of Broughty Ferry.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that in November last Mr. Slidders, of Broughty Ferry, appealed to him for mitigation of punishment; that he has received no reply to his petition; and whether he will inquire into the case.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Postman Slidder's case was carefully reviewed, in connection with appeals from him in February, March and October, 1907; and on the last occasion he was definitely told that he was to regard the reply as final. In these circumstances I was not prepared to reopen the case in November last when he again submitted an appeal to me.

Board of Agriculture Offices.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the First Commissioner of Works what premises are at present occupied by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and under what tenure and at what rent; and whether it is proposed to provide premises which will accommodate all the departments of the Board in a single building.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is as follows—

Premises.	Tenure.	Rent or rental value.
4 and 5, Whitehall Place	Leases expiring April 1912. Office of Works have option of extending term to 5th April, 1919, at rack rental.	£1,199 2s.
3, St. James's Square -	Lease expiring Michaelmas 1917, but determinable at 1910 at six months notice.	£1,500
3, Delahay Street - -	Government property.	£350
Queen Anne's Chambers, Westminster (storage).	Apportionment (part of premises leased to February 1926, but determinable on notice at 1912 or 1919.)	£25
8, Whitehall Place - -	Lease ten years to Midsummer 1917, determinable in 1909 or 1910, on six months notice.	£650 during first three years, £600 thereafter.
Great Scotland Yard (rear of 3, Whitehall Place).	Part of premises held on lease to 1919. The remainder (front portion) sub-leased to 1919.	£200

In reply to the second paragraph I have to say that proposals for accommodating all the departments of the board in a single building are now under discussion.

Admiralty Coal Stock.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what number of tons of coal were contained in the stock valued on 1st April, 1907, at £1,070,959; what is the number of tons of coal estimated to be in stock on 31st March, 1908, and valued at £1,135,000; and what were the number of tons of coal received into stock and issued out of stock during the year 1907–8.

MR. HOLT: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the sum of £1,535,959, estimated value of issues of coal during 1907–8, includes the coal supplied direct by contractors to His Majesty's ships without going into stock; and, if so, what number of tons of coal were supplied direct by contractors.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The sum of £1,535,959, estimated value of issues of coal during 1907–8, includes coal supplied direct to His Majesty's ships without going into stock. Having regard to the interests of the public service, it has been the uniform practice of the Admiralty to withhold information in regard to the other particulars asked for in these Questions.

Yard Craft No. 11.

MR. HOLT: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the estimated speed of "Yard Craft No. 11" (for Sheerness); and whether she is a paddle-wheel, single, or twin-screw vessel.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson*). "Yard Craft No. 11" is not fitted with propelling machinery, but has a boiler which supplies steam for working the capstans, windlass, and other appliances, used in heavy mooring work.

The Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers and Government Contracts.

Mr. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state whether the Portland Cement Company are contractors for the supplying of cement to his Department; and, if so, whether he is aware that the said Company in the Gravesend district are reducing the number of men employed and replacing them by boys, thereby effecting a considerable saving as to the cost of labour; and, if so, whether this is an infringement of the conditions entered into on receiving the Government contract.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane*). The hon. Member probably refers to the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, who are contractors to the War Department. I am not aware whether the process referred to is taking place in this company. Such changes do not involve an infringement of the Fair Wages Clause or any condition of the contract.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Battle Practice.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether certain ships fired trial shots at the target prior to commencing the regular battle practice; and, if so, what are the names of those ships.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): No ships fired trial shots at the battle practice target.

Channel Fleet Battle Practice.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Channel Fleet have taken from September, 1907, until March, 1908, to complete their battle practice.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The answer is in the affirmative.

H.M.S. "Dreadnought."

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why the "Dreadnought" fired her annual course in Aranci Bay.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Experience of a battle practice in the "Dreadnought" was urgently required for the fitting of other ships of her class building. Her experimental cruise to Aranci afforded the earliest opportunity.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: How many shots were fired before the actual course was taken into consideration?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I have no information, but if the noble Lord wishes I will inquire.

Naval Gunnery.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether a competent Admiralty Committee is inquiring into the whole question of gunnery with a view to its improvement.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: No, Sir; the practical experience of the Fleet is constantly affording better information and advice than any Committee which could be convened.

Loch Long Torpedo Range.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty when the negotiations to acquire the site for the Loch Long torpedo range at Greenock were commenced with Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart; when they were completed; and who was the First Lord of the Admiralty at the time the negotiations were entered into.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Negotiations were begun in November, 1905, and completed in January, 1908. In answer to the third Question, the First Lord was Lord Cawdor.

Battle Practice Return.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he would state the names of those ships which have not been returned in the Annual Battle Practice Return as having completed their annual practice.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The list is too long for an oral Answer, and I propose to hand the noble Lord a copy, and have it printed with the Votes.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH: Is the "Cape of Good Hope" among the ships

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Yes, Sir.

Case of Seaman Eli Bath.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the case of Ordinary Seaman Eli Bath, Royal Navy, could now be reconsidered, in view of the fact that he has already been in penal servitude for more than three years, that the assault was entirely unpremeditated and committed in a sudden burst of passion, and that he was only about nineteen years of age at the time.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Had this man's conduct in prison been satisfactory, he would probably have been released before the end of the third year. His conduct has not been satisfactory, and in the opinion of the Admiralty there is no ground for remission of the sentence.

Reserve Battalions—Pay of Sergeant-Majors.

MR. HUNT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, when the existing regimental depots are absorbed into the Reserve battalions, it is intended that the same rate of pay and pension will be issued to sergeant-majors of the Reserve battalions as is now issued to the sergeant-majors of regimental depots, in view of the fact that they will be carrying out the work now performed by the depot sergeant-majors in addition to that of their own Reserve battalions.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): It is not considered necessary to give sergeant-majors of Reserve battalions, if amalgamated with depots, more than is now given to Militia sergeant-majors, as their work will not be so onerous as that of sergeant-majors of Line battalions.

MR. HUNT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these men will have more work under the new regulations than under the old?

MR. HALDANE: No, Sir.

Territorial Yeomanry.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state why, having regard to the fact that quartermaster-sergeants and squadron sergeant-majors of the Territorial Yeomanry are to receive the same rate of pay, wives of the latter are to receive a lower rate of separation allowance than wives of the former.

MR. HALDANE: The arrangements for the Territorial Force follow those for the Regular Army where the regimental quartermaster-sergeant and the squadron sergeant-major draw the same rate of pay but different separation allowance. The quartermaster sergeant ranks a class above the squadron sergeant-major in accordance with paragraph 282 of the King's Regulations.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider the matter?

MR. HALDANE: I see no reason to alter what is laid down in the King's Regulations.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Are the King's Regulations necessarily to be followed in all cases?

[The Answer was inaudible.]

Trade Roads from India to Tibet.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India contemplates the improvement of the trade roads from India into Tibet.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): The Government of India have submitted no proposals to me for improving the roads from India into Tibet.

Low-Grade Technical Training in India.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is intended to establish industrial schools for low-grade technical training, such as would provide a suitable field of recruitment whence to draw students capable of benefiting from the courses provided by the expensive machinery and costly equipment of the Thomasson College at Rurki, which is now practically fulfilling the functions of a low-grade technical school.

MR. MORLEY: I have no information as to the intentions of the Government of India. I have seen nothing to suggest that the local Government are not satisfied that the college is being used to the best advantage in view of existing conditions.

Military Churches in India.

Sir J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether there are any other military stations in India in like circumstances with Jullundar, as having no Presbyterian or unconsecrated church, and to which Scottish regiments are not in future to be sent because of the absence of such buildings; and whether he will state what the military stations are to which they are not to be sent in future.

The following Questions on the same subject also appeared on the Paper:—

Sir J. JARDINE: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he can state in what year the Government church in the Jullundar cantonment was built; whether it was built out of funds accruing from the taxes in India: and whether any annual charge on the Indian finances is caused by the keeping up and repair of the building or as salaries to beadles or caretakers.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can give an undertaking that no church built wholly or in part with public money shall in future be allowed to be consecrated except on the express terms that such consecration shall not be deemed to give rise to any claim to special or exclusive use.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the Bishop of Lahore's assertion that since the Government church, built with public money at Jullundar, has been consecrated, the Church of England has the monopoly of using it; will he say whether the question has ever been tested in any court of law; and whether the Indian Government will take steps to maintain the governmental and public rights to that church by taking legal action to challenge the alleged monopoly.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE (Inverness Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for India what the total cost will be of moving the Gordon Highlanders form Jullundar cantonment to Calcutta in order to provide them with a Presbyterian church; and what will be the cost of moving to Jullundar the regiment which will take their place.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE: To ask the Secretary of State for India what regiment will take the place of the Gordon Highlanders at Jullundar cantonment.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he proposes to take steps to provide a method for removing the consecration of Anglican churches built with public money in Indian cantonments.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he proposes to take steps to give the metropolitan bishop in India power to overrule the decisions of suffragan bishops.

Mr. COWAN (Surrey, Guildford): To ask the Secretary of State for India what were the strengths of the Gordon Highlanders and the Leinster Regiment respectively at the time of the Bishop of Lahore's action as to the use of the Government church in the Jullundar cantonment; what were the numbers of the wives and children moved with these battalions; and whether the expenses of the removal from the one station to the other will be a charge on the Indian or the British taxpayer.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he can say upon what statute or statutes, if any, of this country or of India the claim to the exclusive use of consecrated Government churches is based.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can say when and by whom the bishopric of Lahore was instituted; when and by whom the present bishop was appointed; by whom his stipend is paid; and how, if at all, his *status* in India differs from that of any other minister of religion.

Mr. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will give the names of the military stations, including health resorts, in India, from which, under recent orders, the Scottish regiments will be precluded on account of there being no place of worship for Presbyterian and other Nonconformists.

Mr. LAIDLAW: To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will lay upon the Table the correspondence relating to the action of the Bishop of Lahore in regard to his licence for the use of the Government church in Jullundar cantonment, and the exclusion therefrom of the Gordon Highlanders as regards the celebration of the Christian sacrament.

Sir HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will cause a Memorandum, explaining the position of the different religious communions, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic, in respect to the places of worship in military cantonments in India, to be prepared and laid upon the Table of the House, showing the grounds upon which special privileges are claimed by, or granted to, any one communion; or whether he can refer Members to any document from which this information can be obtained.

Mr. MORLEY: With your permission, Sir, I should like to state the position in a sentence or two dealing with this question. All these Questions touch one particular subject from the different points of view of the various interrogators. I submit that I should be saving the time of the House and consulting the desires of those who have put these Questions on the Paper, if, instead of answering on this subject point by point, I were to place on the Table of the House, as an hon. Member opposite, in fact, proposes that I should, a Memorandum containing the whole history and facts of this rather complex, intricate, and certainly very delicate question. I believe that by so doing I shall do what the House, if they were acquainted with all the circumstances, would desire me to do, and therefore I hope that I may be absolved from answering these Questions in detail, because I will undertake that the Memorandum shall contain an answer to every point raised by my hon. friends. There are Papers already in possession of the House, and have been for several years, but then hon. Members do not always have time to read Blue-books; but they will find a good deal of information on all these points in Command Paper 129 of the year 1900—Papers relating to the use of Presbyterian and Wesleyan services in garrison churches in India. I would only add this, that I understand that the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta sails for this country on the 25th of this month, and I shall have every advantage of consultation with him before I am called upon to reply to any points that may occur to hon. Members in connection with the matter.

Mr. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): May I ask if there will be any opportunity to discuss the question after those Papers have been laid?

Mr. MORLEY: That is a point which I am not competent to answer. It must be addressed to the Leader of the House.

Sir J. JARDINE: When will the Memorandum be laid?

Mr. MORLEY: I should say within a week.

*Sir J. JARDINE intimated he would draw attention to the matter and move a Resolution. He also inquired what arrangement was likely to be made about the Presbyterians in the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the use of these churches.

Mr. MORLEY: I think my hon. friend will be well advised to wait until he sees the Memorandum, and then he can put further Questions.

Sir. J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the War Office is consulted as regards any intended consecration of Government churches in India which are used by British troops for the purpose of Divine services.

Mr. HALDANE: The reply is in the negative.

Madras High Court of Judicature.

Sir J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, as regards the High Court of Judicature at Madras, any native of India qualified as a barrister to be a Judge thereof has a seat on the bench of that High Court?

MR. MORLEY: The reply is in the negative. The Indian Judge is a Vakil of the High Court.

Bombay Ecclesiastical Inquiry.

SIR J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that an inquiry was held last month at the Government Secretariat in Bombay by the Bishops of Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, and Travancore, as regards certain matters of doctrine and ritual in dispute between the Bishop of Bombay and certain clerks in holy orders in which counsel were heard; and whether he can state if the assembly of bishops sat as a court having jurisdiction to pass binding decisions or merely as a council of the Church or as arbitrators by consent of parties?

MR. MORLEY: I have no knowledge of the inquiry referred to in this Question.

Simla Municipal Committee.

MR. LAIDLAW: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he is aware that, by the conditions under which the newly constituted Simla Municipal Committee is to be formed, the constitutional method of electing representatives has been abolished, and that representatives are now to be selected by nomination, and that the largest section of ratepayers in Simla, viz., the owners of private house property, are to have only one representative, out of a total of seven nominated members; and will he take steps to bring about a continuance of the elective system, and also see that the owners of private house property have at least two representatives to protect their large and important interests.

MR. MORLEY: In reconstituting the Simla Municipal Committee in the manner described the Local Government has acted within its legal powers. The Municipal Act of the Punjab leaves it to the Government to settle whether a municipal committee shall be constituted by appointment or by selection. The Government, which has a predominating interest in the good administration of Simla, and has largely financed the municipality, considers that the change will secure greater efficiency and a fairer representation of interests. I am not prepared to interfere in the way suggested.

British Indians in Canada.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had received a telegram from Vancouver from a large meeting of British Indians, which was held in the Sikh Temple, protesting against deportation and exclusion from Canada.

*MR. MORLEY: I received the telegram from Vancouver to which my right hon. friend refers. The only addition I can make to that statement is that I have the matter under my very careful consideration and I am discussing it with the Indian Government and—in concert with the Colonial Office here—with an envoy of the Dominion Government of Canada with the hope of bringing to an end, if possible, this extremely difficult, intricate, and possibly dangerous question.

Transvaal Mining Industry Commission.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Transvaal Mining Industry Commission.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): When the Report is received from South Africa the question of laying it upon the Table shall be fully considered.

Portuguese African Natives in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Natives of Portuguese Africa employed in the Transvaal mines are allowed to take their wives and children with them; and whether any accommodation is provided for their families in the compounds.

MR. CHURCHILL: Provision for taking wives and children is not, as far as I know, made in any of the contracts, but a certain number of women do, as a matter of fact, emigrate and settle in the Transvaal.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will state the rate of pay received by natives recruited for the Transvaal mines from Portuguese Africa, the number of hours they work per day, and whether there are restrictions preventing them doing other than unskilled labour.

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot answer the Question in detail, but generally speaking, the conditions on which natives from Portuguese East Africa work are the same as those on which other Kaffirs work.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the indenture entered into by the Natives from Portuguese Africa when they are recruited for labour in the Transvaal mines.

MR. CHURCHILL: The form has been altered since the copy in the possession of the Colonial Office was received, but amended copies are being sent home by the Governor, and the correct form shall be laid when it is received.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Transvaal Government take steps to satisfy themselves that the natives recruited from Portuguese Africa thoroughly understand the terms of their contract; whether natives who complain of having entered into their contract without full knowledge of what they are undertaking are repatriated out of public funds; and, if so, how many have been so repatriated since June, 1907.

MR. CHURCHILL: I understand that contracts are registered before a Portuguese official. But in view of the very large number of natives who resort to the mines from Portuguese East Africa there can be little doubt that in any case the conditions would be well understood, and I am not aware of any complaints such as are referred to in the Question having been made.

Steamship Communication in East Africa.

SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the large consignments of British produce now being carried in foreign ships from ports along the East African coast, he will consider the advisability of granting practical facilities to some responsible line of British steamers to perform this increasing commercial and Imperial service.

MR. CHURCHILL: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The matter to which my hon. friend refers has engaged the attention of His Majesty's Government for some time, but the negotiations which have been carried on with a view to establishing an adequate service of British steamers on suitable terms have not, up to the present, been successful.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) asked whether the Government had under consideration the question of giving subsidies to some line of British steamers trading to East Africa.

MR. CHURCHILL said that that question had been under consideration, but whether under favourable consideration was another matter.

Natal Premier and British M.Ps.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of the Colonial Secretary has been directed to the speech delivered on Saturday last by Mr. Moore, the Premier of Natal, in which he commented on the action of Members of the House of Commons in putting Questions which were answered frankly and without protest in relation to the continuance of a system of martial law in that Colony, and the incidents of the administration of that system, and applied to the conduct of such Members the term "damnable interference." And whether, regard being had to the fact that Natal owes the preservation of its existence to the defence and protection of Imperial troops maintained by the sums voted by the House of Commons, the Governor of Natal will be requested to represent to the Prime Minister the impropriety of such expressions and the grave results they are calculated to produce.

MR. CHURCHILL rose to reply, when

EARL WINTERTON, on a point of order, asked Mr. Speaker to say whether, in view of his ruling of last May that there was no Department in this country responsible for the Colonial Premiers, it was in order to ask this Question.

*MR. SPEAKER: I should like to have had an opportunity of seeing the Question. It is a long one, and has been sprung upon me at a moment's notice. I do not like to pronounce judgment upon it without having a few moments to consider it. I think it contains a quotation, and, as the hon. Member is well aware, quotations are not permitted in Questions. Perhaps the hon. Member will kindly put it down on the Question Paper.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: The quotation is not put in the form of a quotation in the Question. I make myself responsible for it.

*MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. Member will put it down.

Natal Native Affairs Commission.

MR ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can inform the House as to what action, if any, the Natal Government has taken with respect to the Report of the Natal Native Affairs Commission.

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot at present add anything to my reply to a similar Question put by my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean on 3rd February.

Registration of Trawlers in Norway.

MR. A. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can now state what is the total number of steam trawlers registered in Norway.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): No, Sir. I have not yet received the information, which will not be ready for some days. It is the intention of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to lay a Paper showing the number of steam trawlers and drifters respectively registered in the ports of Western European States, including Norway.

Japan and Formosa.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information to the effect that the Japanese authorities have arranged a plan to extirpate the aboriginal population of the island of Formosa; and, if so, whether he proposes to make any representations to the Japanese Government on the subject.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have neither heard of any such plan, nor do I believe in its existence.

MR. BYLES: Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been drawn to a speech by the Chief Administrator of Formosa in which he said the Government were engaged in clearing the islands.

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice must be given of that Question.

British Understandings with Foreign Powers.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any understanding exists between Great Britain and any Foreign Power which imposes upon the British Government an obligation to keep up either the naval or military forces of the Crown, or any part of them, to any particular strength or standard?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Answer is in the negative. There is no undertaking imposing such an obligation.

Licensing Compensation.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say what was the total amount of compensation awarded under the Licensing Act, 1904, in England and Wales, outside the County of London, during the last year for which the figures are available; and how much of that compensation was awarded to licence holders, to brewers and distillers, and to other parties, respectively.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The volume of Licensing Statistics for 1907 shows that the total amount of compensation paid under the Licensing Act, 1904, in the year 1907 in England and Wales outside the County and City of London was £1,324,808 9s. 8d. Of this a sum amounting to £145,880 13s. 8d. was paid to the licence-holders. The remainder went to other parties interested. I am unable to say how much of it was received by brewers and distillers.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether in the small amount that went to licence-holders, in some cases the holders were also the owners of the property?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir; that would be so, I take it.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from chambers of commerce and similar bodies with regard to the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill; and how many of such chambers have announced their support of the measure.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have received deputations representing the Shipping Federation, the Railway Companies Association, the British Iron Trade Association and other similar bodies, besides many chambers of commerce. Numerous written resolutions have also reached me. I have not received from these or similar bodies representations in support of the Bill. These deputations and resolutions have been concerned with the possible economic effects of the Bill in increasing the cost of production and hampering commerce and industry. In almost every case their forecasts are founded on a basis which is not the basis of the Bill, and are consequently erroneous. I may say that I have paid and am paying the closest attention to the probable effect on output of any given limitation.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: Will the fact of there being no support of this measure have any effect upon the right hon. Gentleman?

MR. GLADSTONE: I pay more regard to the fact that the Bill imposing the eight hours limitation was twice read in this House without a division last year and the year before.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been called to the fact that contracts for the future delivery of coal have been entered into with a proviso in them that if this Eight Hours Bill becomes law the coal will be 1s. 6d. to 2s. per ton higher in price?

MR. GLADSTONE: If the hon. and gallant Gentleman will bring to my notice any such contract I shall be glad to consider it. I am aware that statements have been made that such contracts have been proposed. I have made considerable efforts without success to find out whether such contracts have been made.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Is it not a fact that the Newcastle-under-Lyme Board of Guardians yesterday accepted a contract with those conditions?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of that Question.

MR. W. HARVEY (Derbyshire, N.E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Trade Union Congress, representing over a million people, are unanimously in favour of your Bill?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir.

MR. JOHN WARD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the mining constituencies at the last election at least 100 Unionist candidates had this proposal on their programmes?

MR. GLADSTONE: My hon. friend may feel quite confident I am carefully looking into that.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Does the right hon. Gentleman think the present moment opportune for bringing in this measure?

MR. GLADSTONE: Certainly. Why should it not be?

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the miners of Durham and Northumberland are not really in favour of this Bill?

MR. GLADSTONE: There has been a continuous movement in Durham and Northumberland towards an attitude favourable to the Bill.

Several Members rising to put supplementary Questions to the Home Secretary—

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. I think the rest of this debate had better be taken on the Bill.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say whether the Second Reading of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill will be taken before Easter.

MR. GLADSTONE: I hope so, but I am not yet in a position to say definitely.

China and Earthenware Industry—Lead Poisoning.

MR. ALDEN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that during the months of January and February of this year there were seventeen cases of lead-poisoning in the china and earthenware industry, as against ten for the same two months of 1907; that seven out of the ten persons affected by lead-poisoning during the month of February this year were females; whether he can inform the House as to the number of china and earthenware factories represented by these cases; and how many of these cases have resulted in death.

MR. GLADSTONE: The figures quoted by my hon. friend are correct. The seventeen cases occurred in fourteen factories and one of them was fatal. As I have already announced, I am appointing a Committee to make a further inquiry with regard to lead poisoning in this industry.

Motor 'Bus Traffic in London Streets.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what statute the traffic of motor omnibuses in the streets of London is regulated; and whether they are subject to any restriction as to the amount of smell, noise, and vibration which they cause, from a failure to use machinery of the best type, or from their excessive weight.

MR. GLADSTONE: The traffic of motor omnibuses in London is regulated under the Motor Car Acts of 1896 and 1903, the several Public Carriage Acts, and the Orders made under the Motor Car and Public Carriage Acts. The maximum weight and permissible speed of these vehicles is laid down in the Local Government Board Order of the 27th December, 1904. Some check to unnecessary smell and noise is afforded by the regulations of the Commissioner of Police as to the conditions to be fulfilled before a licence is granted. Moreover the owners of vehicles which are found to offend in these respects are frequently served with notices forbidding them to use the vehicle again until the defect has been remedied.

Central Telegraph Staff Grievances.

MR. WILES (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether telegraphists in the cable room of the Central Telegraph Department are recruited from the staff in the inland section, and forfeit seniority upon their appointment to the cable section; whether an allowance of 2s. 6d. per week is granted to operators who can speak French and German; if it has now been decided that the increment of 3s. per week granted to all telegraphists upon passing a test in technical and professional knowledge is to be merged in the language allowance for the cable staff; and, if so, whether these operators will therefore only receive 6d. per week extra for possessing qualifications that secure 3s. per week to other operators.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The statements in the hon. Member's Question are generally correct, except that the allowance of 2s. 6d. is given to all the operators in the cable room. The merging of the cable room allowance in the technical allowance is in accordance with an explicit recommendation of the Select Committee.

Dallas Letter Deliveries.

Mr. A. WILLIAMSON: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that there are several householders within two miles of the village of Dallas, in Morayshire, who have a delivery of letters twice a week, while others who live four miles from the village have a daily delivery; and whether he will endeavour to improve the present arrangements for the delivery of letters in that district.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have called for a report on this subject, and on its receipt I will communicate with the hon. Member.

Indian Mail Time Table.

Mr. LAIDLAW: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he contemplates the early introduction of the revised time table for the Indian mails; if he will consider the advisability of arranging for a Friday morning instead of a Saturday morning delivery in London; and whether he is aware that the present time table enables Continental firms to reply to their correspondents a week earlier than the British, who are thus seriously handicapped in their competition with foreign traders.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The time table for the Indian mails under the new contract is already in operation. It provides for a delivery of homeward mails at Brindisi at 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, and their receipt in London at 10 p.m. on Fridays. In the monsoon season (May to October) the time is thirty-six hours later. It is probable that occasionally, when the mail arrives at Brindisi in advance of the contract time, a delivery on Friday in London will be possible; but a delivery on Friday morning could only be secured either by an increase of speed, which it was not found practicable to obtain, or by a complete alteration of the time table for Bombay and other Eastern ports. The existing time table was arranged with the concurrence of the Indian Government to the best advantage which circumstances permit; and I regret that I am not in a position to make the desired alteration.

Penny Postage to France.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will favourably consider the proposal to reduce the rate of postage between this country and France to 1d. per half-ounce, as an experiment, during the six months which the Anglo-French Exhibition will be open this year; and whether he is aware that the French authorities are favourably inclined to this proposal, and that the extension of postal and telegraphic facilities with foreign peoples will promote good feeling among the nations and greatly benefit trade.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have received no communication from the French Government in regard to the question, nor am I aware what may be their views in the matter. I do not see how the proposal made by my hon. friend is feasible, nor that it would constitute any real or useful test of the advantages or otherwise of penny postage between France and England.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the French postal authorities in reply to a deputation from the chambers of commerce have expressed themselves in favour of a reduction of the rates?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have received no communication from the French Government on the subject, but of course any communication that may come will receive due consideration.

The National Gallery—Precautions against Fire.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether any competitive tests have been made for the purpose of ascertaining which was the best system of fire resisting construction for the National Gallery extension; and whether Messrs. Fawcett & Company have offered to make competitive tests of their system against the reinforced concrete of foreign design now proposed.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale): The Office of Works does not hold competitive tests for fire-resisting construction. We are quite content with the results of the tests carried out by the British Fire Prevention Committee. It is open to Messrs. Fawcett to arrange with that committee to test their methods.

Kirkburton Church Schools.

Mr. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the managers of the Church school at Kirkburton propose to appoint a Nonconformist assistant teacher in order to give Nonconformist religious teaching; and whether he will procure for the information of the House a copy of the syllabus for that Nonconformist religious teaching and a list of the tests that they propose to apply so as to ascertain whether or not that teacher believes in such instruction.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Lough, Islington, W.): I understand that the promoters of the new voluntary school at Kirkburton propose to provide facilities for those children whose parents do not desire them to receive denominational instruction, but my right hon. friend thinks it would be premature to endeavour to obtain the information desired at this stage of the proceedings.

Royal London Friendly Society.

Mr. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Registrar-General of Friendly Societies is aware that the Royal London Friendly Society is about to take a poll upon the question of its conversion into a mutual insurance company on 10th April, 1908; whether he is aware that the effect of the conversion of the Britannic Friendly Society and the Wesleyan Refuge General Friendly Society has been to depreciate the value of the collectors' books from twenty-five times to five times, and to *nil*, respectively: and what steps, if any, the Registrar-General is taking to prevent similar depreciation befalling the collectors' books of the Royal London Friendly Society in the event of its becoming converted into a mutual insurance company.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury): The Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies informs me that he is not aware that the Royal London Friendly Society is about to take the steps mentioned in the first part of the Question. His jurisdiction does not arise until a meeting has been held and resolutions have been properly passed at such meeting and transmitted to him for registry under the Friendly Societies Act. With regard to the latter part of the Question, the Chief Registrar has no knowledge whatever. He has nothing to do with collectors' books or their value.

Boy Clerks.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that service marks are given by the Civil Service Commissioners to boy clerks in compensation for the difficulties under which their studies are carried on, he will arrange to give service marks to boys of Glasgow and other large towns who can show equal difficulties in the way of carrying on their studies, owing to the demands of their employers on them.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No sir; I think the course proposed by my hon. friend is open to several objections which render it quite impracticable.

Mr. WATT: Does the hon. Gentleman seriously hold that boys in Government employment are more hardly worked than boys outside?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No sir; but it is quite impossible to apply the same regulation to boys in private employment and to those in Government offices.

Stirling Crown Lands.

Mr. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any decision has yet been arrived at with regard to the application for ten five-acre small holdings on the Crown lands at Stirling, adjoining Stirling Castle.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I must refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave yesterday to a Question on the same subject by my hon. friend the Member for Stirlingshire.

Tolsta and Ness Road.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed at a recent meeting at Ness, Stornoway, Island of Lewis, representing

4,000 inhabitants of the Ness district, and pressing for the construction of a road between Tolsta and Ness; and will he state what action it is proposed to take in the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The resolution was duly received and referred to the Congested Districts Board for consideration.

Carloway and Stornoway Road.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Congested Districts Board will consider the expediency of making arrangements to complete the road between Carloway and Stornoway.

MR. SINCLAIR: I can hold out no prospect at present that the very serious expenditure involved in this enterprise can be undertaken by the Board.

MR. WEIR: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Tory Government made one-half of this road—7½ miles—and would it not be a graceful thing for a Liberal Government to complete it?

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware also that all the grants made to crofters in this district have been made by the Conservative and Unionist Government?

[No Answer was returned.]

Dog Poisoning in Ross-shire.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the persons responsible for dog poisoning last year in the Kilmuir and Logie districts of Ross-shire have now been brought to justice.

MR. SINCLAIR: The active efforts of the police in this matter have proved so far unsuccessful.

MR. WEIR: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of sending detectives to this district, seeing that the dog poisoners are never caught?

[No Answer was returned.]

Education (Scotland) Bill.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can yet say when the Education (Scotland) Bill will be introduced; and whether he is aware that all parties are agreed that there should be legislation on this matter this session of Parliament.

MR. SINCLAIR: I can only refer my hon. friend to my reply of 19th March to the Question of the hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, to the effect that I hope to be able to make a definite statement upon this point before Easter. I note my hon. friend's opinion as to the attitude of all parties upon this subject.

Canal Communication in Scotland.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether in view of the changes which will be brought about by the construction of a naval base at Rosyth and the extreme desirability of the shipbuilding facilities in the Clyde being placed in direct communication with it, he will consider the desirability of appointing a Commission to report fully upon the question of enlarging the existing canal between the Clyde and the Firth of Forth and on the economical, commercial, strategic, and naval advantages to be derived from such a great public work.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): My hon. friend is no doubt aware that a Royal Commission is now considering the whole question of the Canals and Waterways of the United Kingdom, and it therefore seems unnecessary to appoint another Commission at the present time to consider this particular matter.

MR. PIRIE asked whether it was not the case that the terms of reference of the existing Commission did not include strategic considerations, and whether it would be possible to enlarge the terms of reference.

MR. ASQUITH: I will inquire into that.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would have this particular canal considered by the Commission.

MR. ASQUITH: I am told it has been considered.

Landless Cottars Raid in Barra.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has any information to the effect that the wives, sisters, and daughters of thirty-five landless cottars have taken forcible possession of that part of the farm of Ealigarry in Barra, known as Vaselin, the property of Messrs. William and Murdock M'Gillivray; and will he state whether the Government propose to take any steps to secure land for the landless cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: For the reply to the first part of my hon. friend's Question, I beg to refer him to the reply given to the Question of the hon. Member for North-west Lanark. The Government are fully alive to the desirability of improving the position of the landless cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Illegal Trawling off the Scottish Coast.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the line-fishing industry around the coast of Scotland is being ruined through the action of illegal trawlers, many of which fly the Norwegian flag; and, seeing that the State of Norway was not party to the North Sea Fisheries Convention of 1882, will the Fishery Board for Scotland consider the expediency of framing a bye-law under Section 10 of The Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Act, 1895, prohibiting vessels flying the Norwegian flag from fishing in either the Minch or Moray Firth.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am well aware of the conflict of interest to which my hon. friend alludes, but the remedy which he suggests does not seem to offer a practicable solution of the difficulty.

MR. WEIR: Are not these trawlers really sea robbers, and will not the right hon. Gentleman look at this matter and frame a bye-law?

MR. SINCLAIR: That does not arise out of the Question.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman suggest no remedy whatever?

MR. SINCLAIR: We are endeavouring to find and employ such remedies as are possible.

MR. A. WILLIAMSON: Do not most of these so-called foreign trawlers hail from Grimsby?

MR. SINCLAIR: That is so.

MR. WEIR: Are they not registered in Norway, and do they not sail under the Norwegian flag?

MR. SINCLAIR: Yes, I believe that is the case with this particular class of trawlers.

MR. MORTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that these trawlers are ruining the fishermen and their families all round the Moray Firth?

MR. SINCLAIR: That is rather a controversial question.

Scottish Fishery Bills.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, seeing that he has decided to block the Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill and the Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill, will he state whether it is his intention to block all Bills brought in by Scottish Members and thus prevent necessary reforms for the welfare of the people of Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: No, Sir.

MR. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): Upon what principle has the right hon. Gentleman blocked private Members' Bills relating to Scotland?

MR. SINCLAIR: If the hon. Member will put down a Question I will give him an answer.

MR. WEIR: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill was drafted by the present Secretary for War when he was in Opposition?

MR. SINCLAIR: I have nothing to add to my Answer.

MR. WEIR: Why is the right hon. Gentleman proposing to block these two Bills?

MR. SINCLAIR: I have already fully answered that Question.

Penalties for Illegal Trawling.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the sheriff, in giving judgment against a trawler at Campbeltown, Argyllshire, last summer, stated that the penalties should be increased so as to compel those law breakers to obey the law as to illegal trawling; whether he is also aware that the sheriff stated there should be faster police boats; under those circumstances, what steps does he propose to take to strengthen the law in accordance with the view of the sheriff; and will he assist to pass the Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Bill instead of opposing it.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have no information other than that furnished by my hon. friend on the matters referred to in the earlier part of my hon. friend's Question. With regard to the Sea Fisheries Regulation Bill I can add nothing to my reply of 19th instant.

MR. MORTON: Has the right hon. Gentleman seen the judgment of the sheriff of Campbeltown?

MR. SINCLAIR: Yes, Sir.

MR. YOUNGER: Is it not possible to make closer inquiry in view of the fact that the fines now inflicted are found not to be deterrent in the least degree.

MR. SINCLAIR: If the hon. Gentleman will put down a specific Question I shall be happy to make inquiry.

Scottish School Gardens.

MR. GULLAND: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can say how many school gardens exist in Scotland; and what steps, if any, he intends to take to bring prominently before school boards the new provisions of the Code on this subject.

MR. SINCLAIR: Though the Department have reason to believe that such school gardens are not uncommon, they have no statistics bearing on the point. A copy of the Code has, in accordance with Article 34 thereof, to be provided for every school, and the alterations for the year are printed separately in an appendix. The matter, therefore, cannot very well escape the attention of school boards, but the Department are in consultation with the governors of the agricultural colleges as to the best means of organising satisfactory instruction in this subject in their several districts.

Union Jack and Irish Schools.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether there is any legal or departmental order prohibiting the flying of the Union Jack over national schools in Ireland where a general desire among the parents and children to do so is expressed, and where the manager raises no objection.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am informed that in 1888 a case was brought to the notice of the Commissioners of National Education, in which the Union Jack was exhibited in a national school, and the then Commissioners decided that they could not sanction the exhibition of flags of any description in national schools. I am not aware of any more recent decision of the Commissioners, but I understand that the question was to be considered by the Commissioners at their meeting to-day.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the Chief Secretary say whether, in view of the generally expressed desire in the North of Ireland, he will ask the Commissioners of Education in Ireland if they will not reverse their decision and allow the national flag to be flown on national schools where the managers, parents, and children are all agreed?

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): What is the national flag of Ireland?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no evidence before me of such desirable unanimity of opinion as would make such a thing desirable.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the Question on the Paper as to whether there is any legal objection?

MR. BIRRELL: There is a rule of the Commissioners that no emblems or symbols of a political nature—[Loud OPPOSITION cries of "Oh!"] The hon. Member asked me whether the Commissioners had any rules on the subject. The only rule I can find bearing on the subject is of the character I was endeavouring to read to the House. Of course, if hon. Gentlemen do not wish to hear it, I am perfectly satisfied to hold my tongue. It is provided in the rules that no emblems or symbols of a political nature may be exhibited in the school or affixed to the exterior of the building, and in the case of a school which was before the Commissioners in 1888, it was decided not to exhibit a flag on the school.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman considers the Union Jack of England a political flag?

MR. BIRRELL: The Union Jack of England represents a political transaction, and in that sense it has a political meaning, of which none of us, I hope, have any reason to be ashamed.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): Has the right hon. Gentleman any precedent for calling it the Union Jack of England?

MR. BIRRELL: I offer a thousand apologies.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that the Union Jack is constantly used on placards and cards and otherwise in a party sense by Unionists?

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): And the King had to stop it at the last general election.

[No Answer was returned.]

Case of Michael Gaffney at the Mountmellick Sessions.

MR. DELANY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the proceedings of the Mountmellick petty sessions, held on the 9th instant, in which a man named Michael Gaffney was charged by Acting-Sergeant Byrne with being drunk while in charge of a horse and cart on the 6th March; whether he is aware that the acting-sergeant arrested Gaffney, notwithstanding the protests of several respectable residents of Mountmellick, and placed him in the barrack guard-room, and that the dispensary doctor, who was called in by his solicitor within half an hour after his arrest, declared Gaffney perfectly sober, who was then taken before a magistrate and discharged, but was subsequently summoned by Byrne, who swore at the trial that the man was drunk and incapable on the occasion named, and insinuated in cross-examination that the five respectable witnesses who proved the contrary, amongst them the doctor, were also under the influence of drink on the 6th instant; and whether seeing that the bench of six magistrates including the resident magistrate, dismissed the case upon its merits, he will say what course he proposes taking with regard to this policeman.

MR. BIRRELL: In this case there was a conflict of evidence between the police witnesses and the witnesses for the defence. Acting-sergeant Byrne and three constables gave evidence that the defendant was, when arrested, drunk and incapable of taking charge of his horse and cart, while four witnesses called by the defendant gave evidence that he was not drunk, and Dr. O'Brien who was called in nearly an hour after the arrest swore that he was then perfectly sober and could not have been drunk when arrested. The magistrates dismissed the case. It would therefore appear that the acting sergeant and the other policemen made a mistake, but in the Inspector General's opinion there is nothing to show that they acted otherwise than in good faith. The matter will receive the attention of the Inspector General.

Marshall Estate, Kerry.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL, (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in the case of the Marshall estate, county Kerry, requests for purchase under Section 6 of the Act of 1903 were signed by the tenants in June 1904, and that the estate was inspected and valued nearly twelve months ago; and whether, seeing that nearly four years have elapsed since negotiations were begun, and that considerable inconvenience is caused by the delay, steps will be taken to have the sale completed in the near future.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that the originating request under Section 6 in this case was lodged in June 1905. The estate was inspected during the latter half of last year and the Commissioners hope to make a formal offer for purchase at an early date. The case is being dealt with in its proper order, regard being had to the priority of other cases in which proceedings were commenced at an earlier date.

Kilfinane Evicted Tenants.

Mr. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that on the 2nd of March, 1908, two tenants on the town property of Colonel Gascoigne, in Kilfinane, were evicted; can he say whether the landlord's representatives attended on the occasion, or did the police take part in breaking the doors; and if so, were they acting in accordance with the constabulary code.

Mr. BIRRELL: This was a case of ejection from tenements, and the warrants were addressed to the police for execution under the Act 14 and 15 Vic., cap. 92. The houses were locked up and the tenants, who were outside, refused to give up the keys. The police, therefore, broke a pane of glass in each house in order to effect an entrance. In so doing the police were acting in accordance with the law. Possession was given up by the police to the landlord's representatives.

Mr. LUNDON: Who gave the police this order?

Mr. BIRRELL: Under the Act the magistrates are bound to give the order, either to the police or to a special bailiff. Sometimes they give it to one and sometimes to the other. It is for the landlord to apply and then the magistrates make the order.

Colonel Gascoigne and his Tenantry.

Mr. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that for the past three years negotiations for sale to his tenants have been in progress between Colonel Gascoigne and those holding farms on his Kilfinane estate; has a Mr. Howard, an inspector of the Estates Commissioners, at the request of the town tenants, come down to report on the propriety or feasibility of sale and purchase as between Colonel Gascoigne and the town tenants, and, if so, with what result; can the Estates Commissioners see their way to carry out the sale to the town tenants; and, in their interest and for stability of the sale, and the better to secure the repayment of instalments of purchase money, will the Commissioners negotiate for buying a large untenanted farm outlying the town to be divided among them in lots as it may be deemed advisable.

Mr. BIRRELL: Proceedings for the sale of the rural portion of this estate have been instituted before the Estates Commissioners, who have also received an application from the town tenants that their holdings should be included in the sale. The inspector has been inspecting the estate for the past few weeks, but his report is not expected for some time yet. Upon the receipt of that report the Commissioners will consider the matters referred to in the Question.

Irish Sub-Postmasters' Pay.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether sub-postmasters in Ireland are paid at the rate of £1 7s. per month; that these officials have to work thirteen hours per day, superintend money order business, and provide at their own expense light and firing for their offices; and, if so, whether he will consider the question of having the salaries of these officials increased.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Sub-postmasters in Ireland are paid on the same scale as in the rest of the United Kingdom. The payment is not a fixed one, as the hon. Member appears to think, but varies with the amount of business transacted. The scale was examined by the Select Committee and they recommended certain changes. I am about to issue a notice on the subject to sub-postmasters.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to carry out the changes proposed by the Select Committee?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I had an interview with representatives of the sub-postmasters the other day, and as a result I hope the arrangement made for carrying out the recommendations—with one or two exceptions—meets with their approval.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his promise immediately to increase the pay of the adult night messengers has not been carried out?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That hardly arises out of this Question.

Secret Service Fund.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will explain why nearly £13,000 was spent on secret service during the year 1906–7 more than was spent the previous year, 1905–6, the figures being 1905–6 £35,427 and 1906–7 £48,411.

MR. ASQUITH: In making these grants under the head of "Secret Service" Parliament expressly waives its right to the explanations to which it is otherwise entitled in respect of all grants of public money, and to give such explanations would be to defeat the object of the grants.

Savings Bank.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Consols held on account of the Post Office Savings Bank Fund stand at a cost price, on balance, of £103 6s. 5d. per cent., while the Consols held on account of the Trustee Savings Banks Fund stand at a cost price, on balance, of £94 3s. 6d. per cent., or a difference in favour of the Trustee Savings Banks Fund of £9 2s. 11d. per cent.; whether as regards the purchase of Consols, the Post Office Savings Bank and the Trustee Savings Banks are equally under the control of the Government; and will he explain the difference, representing on the £59,072,319 Consols held on the 31st December, 1907, on account of the Post Office Savings Bank Fund, an extra cost of over £5,400,000.

MR. ASQUITH: The investments on account of the Trustee Savings Banks Fund began in 1817. The investments for the Post Office Savings Banks Fund did not begin till 1861. It could not be expected that the transactions on behalf of the two funds, extending over such different periods, would yield the same cost price on balance for the Consols now held. It would be impossible in answer to a question to go through the history of the two funds so as to explain how the difference of cost has arisen. But I may mention that in the period from 1895 to 1899, when the price of Consols was abnormally high, the purchases for the Post Office Banks amounted to £25,000,000, and those for the trustee banks to only £5,700,000. The investments are made for both funds alike by the National Debt Commissioners.

Inhabited House Duty.

MR. H. J. CRAIG (Tynemouth): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the case of buildings let partly as offices and partly to residential tenants, he will consider a re-adjustment of the present method of assessment to the Inhabited House Duty, so as to allow of a separate assessment in respect of that portion of the building which is used residentially.

I beg further to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the present method of assessment to the Inhabited House Duty operates so as artificially to restrict residential accommodation in central districts of London by preventing the letting of upper floors in large office blocks to residential tenants; and whether he will consider the advisability of revising the whole incidence of this tax, with a view to increasing its yield while reducing its amount and extending the field of its operation.

MR. ASQUITH: I may say, in reply to these Questions, that I am aware that cases of hardship sometimes arise in the circumstances described, and the matter is one which shall receive my careful consideration, if and when an opportunity arises for dealing with the amendment of the law relating to Inhabited House Duty.

Sugar Duty.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the estimate of co-operative societies of this country that the sugar tax has cost their customers, who are almost exclusively of the working class, no less a sum than £4,426,937 in the last seven years: and whether, in his forthcoming Budget, he will give full consideration to this burden on the poorer taxpayers of the country.

MR. ASQUITH: I have received representations from the Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Congress to the effect stated. My hon. friend may be sure that no aspect of the matter will fail to receive most careful consideration.

THE LATE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): Mr. Speaker, I must ask the indulgence of the House, which I am sure will be very readily granted, for I crave permission to refer for a moment to the sad intelligence which has reached us this morning of the death of one of the most distinguished of British statesmen. In the Duke of Devonshire we have lost almost the last survivor of our heroic age. This is not the occasion upon which it would be fitting to attempt any survey of his long and eminent career, but this House owes, and I am sure will be anxious at once to pay, its own special tribute to him. It is true that it is now many years since he sat upon our benches, but we cannot forget that for the larger part of his political life he was a Member of this Assembly, that he held here in succession some of the most responsible offices under the Crown, and that for five years, unusually full of arduous and trying emergencies, he was Leader of the Opposition. I am not using the language of exaggeration when I say that in the closing years of his life he commanded in a greater degree than perhaps any other public man the respect and confidence of men of every shade and section of opinion in this kingdom. That position he won for himself, and by himself, by a life of single-minded devotion to duty. There has been no more splendid example in our time of service which can be rendered to the State by simplicity of nature, sincerity of conviction, directness of purpose, intuitive insight into practical conditions, quiet and inflexible courage, and, above all, I would say, tranquil indifference to praise and blame, and by absolute disinterestedness. Those are the qualities which we are proud to think our country breeds in her sons. They were never more happily mixed, or more fruitfully employed, than in the character and life of the Duke of Devonshire.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I think all who have heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit not only that he has done well to ask this House to join, informally, indeed, but none the less really, in expressing its profound regret at the loss which public life in this country has sustained, but they will agree with me in thinking that that tribute to a great man departed could not have been proffered in terms more exquisitely or more fittingly chosen, or that more aptly illustrated and expressed the feelings of every gentleman who heard it. This is not the time nor is it the place when we can attempt any survey of the position which the Duke of Devonshire held in, and the effect which he produced upon, the great movements of politics and parties during the long period in which he bore a prominent place in the councils of his country. I certainly do not mean to touch upon that theme. But if, as all will admit, his influence was great, I think he owed it not merely to those abilities with which he was so richly endowed, but to that transparent honesty and simplicity of purpose which not only existed in him in an exceptional measure, but was quite obvious to every man with whom he came in personal contact, to every audience which he addressed, and which, when it is real and plain is one of the most potent factors in public influence. I think of all the great statesmen I have known the Duke of Devonshire was the most persuasive speaker; and he was persuasive because he never attempted to conceal the strength of the case against him. As I put that, it might be regarded as a rhetorical art, but as a rhetorical art it would have been wholly ineffective. In the Duke of Devonshire it was effective because he brought before the public in absolutely clear, transparent, and unmistakable terms the very arguments he had been going through patiently and honestly before he arrived at his conclusions. He had seen all the difficulties which he ultimately had to pursue. He knew as we all know, that there are arguments, real and strong arguments, to be urged on both sides of almost every practical question that has to be decided. What made the Duke of Devonshire persuasive to friends and foes alike was that when he came before the House of Commons or any other Assembly, he told them the processes through which his own mind had gone in arriving at the conclusion at which he ultimately had arrived. Every man felt that this was no rhetorical device, but that he had shown in clear and unmistakable terms the very intimate processes by which he had arrived at the conclusion which he then honestly supported without fear or favour, without dread of criticism, without hope of applause. He had that quality in a far greater measure than any man I have ever known; and it gave him a dominant position in any Assembly. In the Cabinet, in the House of Commons, in the House of Lords, on the public platform, wherever it was, every man said, "Here is one addressing us who has done his best to master every aspect of this question, who has been driven by logic to arrive at certain conclusions, and who is disguising from us no argument on either side which either weighed with him or moved him to come to the conclusion at which he has arrived. How can we hope to have a more clear-sighted or honest guide in the course we ought to pursue?" That was the secret of his great strength as an orator. As a man he had a singular gift. He had that transparent simplicity of character which gave him the power of arousing and retaining the affections of all those with whom he came into personal contact. As to his public life, that is before us. We all know it. Part of it is a matter of history, part of it has come under our own observation; and whether we regard it as historians, or look at it by the light of our personal experience, there can be but one verdict on the great career now drawn to its close—that he was a man of singularly transparent honesty and public spirit, and that in his death the whole public life of England has diminished in dignity and has suffered a loss which it is impossible in our time it can ever wholly repair.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence and an Appendix, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 99.]

SELECTION (STANDING) COMMITTEES.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Walter Rea and Mr. Arthur Dewar; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Education (Local Authorities) Bill): Mr. Alfred Hutton and Mr. Rogers.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

"To amend The Public Health Act, 1875, and The Local Government Act, 1888," presented by Mr. Cooper; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Crooks, and Mr. Straus: to be read a second time upon Wednesday 6th May, and to be printed. [Bill 172.]

EDUCATION (CONTINUATION SCHOOLS) BILL.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): In rising to ask leave to introduce a Bill to establish Compulsory Continuation Schools in England and Wales, I trust that the House will deem the importance of the subject sufficient excuse for my trespassing upon its time for the space of a few minutes. The attention of the House has been largely occupied during recent years with one particular aspect of the subject of education, but it is my good fortune to-day, at least, not to have to tread the thorny path of sectarian controversy. More fortunate than my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education, I am able to direct the attention of the House to the real needs of the rising generation. The Bill covers both urban and rural districts, but the brief moments I have at disposal only enable me to deal with the larger urban side. For good or for evil, the majority of our people have become town dwellers. Far more than in any other country, our children are children of the city. Herded together in great masses, denied the simple security of existence which lies in direct access to the soil as a means of livelihood, exposed to the many vicissitudes which arise from roughly organised machine production on a large scale, the working populations of our large towns stand more than ever before in need of training in the arts of industry. Since industry is to be their occupation I submit that we must see to it that they lack nothing that we can easily bestow upon them of fit training for their destiny. And only less important because the numbers concerned are smaller, is the necessity of scientific agricultural training in rural districts. What is the actual condition of the youth of our towns? The answer is in too large a number of cases that they pass into the work of life altogether untrained. After a few brief years of elementary education they are set free, at the most dangerous period of their lives, at the beginning of adolescence, to become wage-earners. They pass into the seething turmoil of modern industry to play a game for wages without knowledge of the rules. In the great majority of cases no systematic education is received after thirteen or fourteen years of age. Perhaps the House will forgive me if I endeavour to show what the facts of the case are. At the last Census there were in England and Wales 4,600,000 youths of both sexes. How many of these continue their education? According to the Education Reports there were in attendance at various continuation schools numbers as follows: Working class and lower middle class students in England and Wales (fifteen to twenty-one years of age), 1904–5: technical institutions, 2,500; schools of art, 21,100; day technical classes, 780; day art classes, 2,600; evening schools, 360,000; higher elementary schools, 10,000; estimate for middle classes, 400,000; total, 796,980. Thus some 800,000 students between fourteen and twenty-one years of age are to be found in all England, as against nearly 5,000,000 youths of that age. Therefore only one in six of those between fourteen and twenty-one are undergoing any sort of systematic education. Even if we take those between fourteen and eighteen only, it is clear that some 2,000,000 out of 2,800,000 have done with education for ever. What is the practical result? Our towns are loaded with untrained boys and girls drifting surely into the ranks of the incompetent. For a few brief years the boys find it easy to earn money as van boys, shop boys, errand boys, lift boys. At about seventeen or eighteen years of age they find it difficult to obtain employment. Untrained, unskilled, they go to swell the ever-growing ranks of the unskilled labourers. It is in view of these melancholy facts that I beg to introduce a Bill for the continued education and training of the young. With the permission of the House I will briefly describe the provisions of the measure. In the first place, the Bill abolishes all total or partial exemptions from school attendance for boys and girls under fourteen years of age. It seems to me that it is an indispensable preliminary to compulsory continuation schools to see to it that fourteen years shall be the minimum for school exemption. Having abolished the half-timer, and made attendance at elementary schools compulsory until fourteen years of age, the Bill defines a "continuation scholar" as a boy between fourteen and seventeen, or a girl between fourteen and sixteen years of age. Having thus defined the ages within which continued education is to be compulsory, the Bill sets out the duty of the education authority in regard to continuation schools. The education authority is to establish classes, free of all fees, "for the continued education and technical training of all continuation scholars in its district who do not attend approved day secondary or day technical schools." As to the time of attendance, the Bill provides that the continuation schools are to be day schools, or, to be more precise, that the classes are not to terminate later than 6 o'clock p.m. On this point as on others, there may admittedly be differences of opinion, but I submit my own view that as the day is the proper time for work it is the proper time for school. The hours of attendance per week are to be six, and it is within the discretion of the authority to distribute those six hours over the week, whether on two days or three, or otherwise, as may least disturb the economic arrangements of the district. With a view both to interesting employers in the training of the boys and girls in their employ, and with a view to making such arrangement as shall least disturb industry, the education authority is allowed to co-opt, for the purpose of the measure, any number of employers not exceeding six. As to the standard of education and the curriculum, it is set out that the authority shall provide sufficient places, apparatus, material, books, tools, etc., as shall enable every boy and girl to be thoroughly trained. The scheme must have the approval of the Board of Education. The attendance of the scholars, as I have explained, is to be compulsory, and both the parent and the employers of the boy or girl are placed under penalties to secure such attendance. The cost of carrying out the provisions of the Bill is to be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament. The scheme thus broadly outlined is admittedly drastic. There is room, obviously, for many differences of opinion as to details, as to the limits of age, the hours of attendance and so forth. I shall be very happy to consider all representations that may be made on such points, but I am not without hope that at least the principle of the Bill may be freely and widely accepted by all parties in this House. The Bill as it stands, simply seeks to carry into effect here the admirable scheme of training which is actually in successful operation at Munich, and spreading from Munich to other parts of Germany. Ahead of us in educational matters for many generations Germany is drawing further ahead. Last year, when in Munich, I had the opportunity to see the Munich Continuation Schools and to hear from the lips of Dr. Kerschensteiner, their director, a description of their method. I was immensely impressed with their efficiency and their practical results. Admittedly such a measure is costly, but how better could we spend national wealth than in raising the standard of training of the great mass of our people? If we are to hold our own in the increasing intensity of modern competition, if we are to be worthy to continue to lead a great Empire, the necessity of increased expenditure is clearly forced upon us. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Motion made and Question—"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish compulsory Continuation Schools in England and Wales, and to amend the Education Acts, 1870 to 1902, in respect of the age of compulsory school attendance,"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chiozza Money, Mr. Alden, Mr. Ellis Davies, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Mallet, Mr. Masterman, Mr. Walker, and Mr. John Ward.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 13th April, and to be printed. [Bill 173.]

LICENSING (CONSOLIDATION) BILL.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): In asking leave to introduce this Licensing Consolidation Bill I desire to inform the House that it is absolutely a Consolidation Bill. In the course of the consolidation a few minor defects in Licensing Law have been discovered and, according to precedent, will be dealt with in the Sixth Schedule of the Licensing Bill itself. This Bill will, I think, be of very considerable service to hon. Members in discussing the Licensing Bill. I beg to move.

Motion made and Question—"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate the Law relating to Justices' Licences for the sale by retail of intoxicating liquor"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Solicitor-General, and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

Bill to consolidate the Law relating to Justices' Licences for the sale by retail of intoxicating liquor, presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 174.]

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields): I shall perhaps meet the convenience of the House best if, instead of waiting for the discussion, I proceed at once to state very briefly the intentions of this Bill. In order to insure that this Bill shall not be discussed at great length at this stage, I may say I propose upon its passing a Second Reading to move that it be committed to a Committee of the Whole House. The object of the Bill is to separate the office of Director of Public Prosecutions from that of Solicitor to the Treasury, and to constitute an independent office. The measure is very urgent owing to the fact that the Criminal Appeal Act will come into operation next month and under the operation of that Act every appeal that reaches a hearing will have to be defended by the Director of Public Prosecutions. This it is quite clear will greatly add to the work of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is also Solicitor to the Treasury, and will put a great accession of duty on an already overburdened official. Quite apart from the Criminal Appeal Act, it has been obvious not only to my predecessors and myself, but to the Treasury, that some relief must be given to the Solicitor to the Treasury in the administration of criminal law. The House will scarcely appreciate how manifold are the duties of this officer. The Solicitor to the Treasury is also the chief responsible active solicitor for the Home Office, the War Office, the Admiralty, the Office of Works, and the Education Department. He has to act in any litigation that may arise in connection with the subordinate offices of the Treasury, such as the Stationery Office and the British Museum, and he also acts with the Solicitor-General in matters of the administration of charities, which is a very heavy and complicated branch of the public service. Besides that he is the King's Proctor, and it is his duty to intervene as such in divorce cases where it is necessary in order to prevent abuse of the Divorce Law. His duties have also lately been increased by his having to deal with questions of international law. As King's Proctor he is a member of a committee of the Hague Conference and as such has to preside over other committees. The result of all this is that in his work in the administration of the criminal law he runs the risk of being overburdened beyond endurance on the coming in of the Criminal Appeal Act. It is impossible that he can go beyond the act of supervision in the great bulk of his various offices. But his supervision must be real. He has to understand the issues that are to be tried; he has to be ready to advise upon the steps to be taken; and he must, above all, take care that prosecutions are not brought unless there is good reason to believe he will obtain a verdict. Of course he delegates some of his work, but delegation may be carried to such a point that effective supervision becomes impossible. It is to avoid that danger that the Government now ask the House to pass this Bill. Its provisions are very simple. It provides for the appointment of a Director of Public Prosecutions by the Secretary of State, and stipulates that he shall have such Assistant Directors of Public Prosecutions as are found to be necessary. The remuneration of the Director and his assistants is to be fixed by the Treasury, and paid out of monies provided by Parliament. The Director of Public Prosecutions is to be a barrister or solicitor of not less than twenty years standing, whilst his assistants must be barristers or solicitors of not less than seven years standing. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir W. Robson.*)

*MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): As a simple layman I hesitate to offer any remarks at all on a Bill of this character, especially when the object of it is to set up a new and expensive office to be filled by members of the legal profession. But I rise for the purpose of getting official information from the hon. and learned Gentleman. I wish to know why it is this Bill becomes necessary. This Bill re-enacts the Act of 1879 which was superseded. That Act separated these offices, but in the year 1883 it appeared that the continued separation of these two offices was costly and not efficient, and a strong Committee was appointed to inquire and report. They acquired a greater knowledge than I possess of the subject, and I call the attention of the hon. Gentleman to their remarks. The Committee was composed of Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry James, Lord Herschell, Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir John Gorst, Sir Henry Fowler, and others. We have among them, therefore, the distinguished legal authority of Lord James of Hereford and Lord Herschell. They recommended that the system introduced in 1879 should be departed from, and that the offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions and of the Solicitor to the Treasury should be once more united. They did so on the ground of practical convenience and the saving of expense. They pointed out that the Director of Public Prosecutions with a salary of £2,000 a year was absolutely unnecessary; that he had also six assistants to help him to do his work; and that it would be much better to employ the services of the Solicitor to the Treasury which were immediately available. They said—

> "We are of opinion that the existing system—which in its conception was necessarily of a tentative character—requires modification and development. At present the Director of Public Prosecutions is consulted and determines upon prosecutions, but takes no practical part in their conduct—a duty which is remitted by him to the Solicitor to the Treasury."

I presume the Solicitor to the Treasury will still have to be consulted on the question of prosecutions—that he will still have to come in. The Report proceeds—

> "By the light of experience since gained, it appears to us that it would conduce both to efficiency and economy if the duty of deciding in which cases the State should undertake the prosecution were united in the same department as that upon which is devolved the duty of practically conducting the prosecution when determined on. We have accordingly considered to which of the two existing departments the combined duties might be most conveniently assigned. If they were entrusted to the separate office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, as at present constituted, it would be necessary to create a new and expensive staff competent to conduct all the criminal prosecutions of the State."

They went on to say that it was true the staff of the Solicitor to the Treasury was available, and could be used for the purpose, but that they did not see their way to an arrangement for dividing the two offices without a considerable waste of administrative power. The Report continues—

> "We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the better plan will be to unite the two branches of the work under the control of the Treasury Solicitor. If this recommendation is adopted there will no longer remain any duties for the Director of Public Prosecutions or his assistant to discharge; and the two offices could be forthwith merged and consolidated by appointing the Solicitor of the Treasury to the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions."

These are questions to which I wish to direct the attention of the Solicitor-General, in order that he may explain, in view of this Report, signed with these names, why it is necessary to depart from the Act of 1884, which resulted from those recommendations, and revert to the Act of 1879. The cost of the office after 1879 was only £2,000; I have no doubt, if you again separate the offices, that in the present day the cost would be £4,000. The Attorney-General spoke slightingly of delegation, but under Section 5 of the Bill there is a rather sweeping power of delegating to the Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions those powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions which he is authorised to exercise by or in pursuance of any Act of Parliament. The Assistant Director may do anything his Director may do. In the case of the Director of Public Prosecutions he has to have ten years legal standing; in the case of the Assistant Director he is only to have seven years standing, yet he is to carry out exactly the same work as the Director of Public Prosecutions. There seems to be room for explanation there. The main question is why it is thought necessary to repeal the Act of 1884, based on that Report to which I have referred, and revert to the Act of 1879, which the Committee condemned because it was inefficient and expensive.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that the Attorney-General had supplied the answers which his hon. friend had asked for. He understood that there would be a great amount of work thrown on the Treasury by the new Criminal Appeal Court, and that it was necessary to separate the two offices. The Attorney-General had not alluded to this Report, but he presumed that with his great knowledge he was aware of it. The hon. and learned Gentleman assented to that; but he must say, after listening to his hon. friend's very clear exposition of the Report, that it struck him as affording very good ground for opposing the Bill. The hon. and learned Gentleman had told them that the amount of work which would be thrown upon the Solicitor-General by the Court of Criminal Appeal Act would be very great.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir SAMUEL EVANS, Glamorganshire, Mid.): It will be enormous.

SIR F. BANBURY did not see why they should not wait for a year to see. He supposed that if they wait for a year they would then know what steps to take. As economy was the order of the day, it would be better to wait for a year to see what was going to take place under the Criminal Court of Appeal measure, before they went in absolute opposition to a Report signed by such eminent men, and set up another and extremely expensive office. As he understood, the hon. and learned Gentleman was going to take away from the Solicitor to the Treasury not only the new work which would arise under the Court of Criminal Appeal Act, but all the work which he did now in connection with public prosecutions. If that gentleman had been able to carry out public prosecutions satisfactorily up to the present time—he was not sure that they had always been caried out satisfactorily—he did not see why the work should be taken from him. Why not take away from him only the new work in connection with the Court of Criminal Appeal? It was evident from what the Solicitor-General said, that the Director of Public Prosecutions would have plenty to do, and, if they limited his work to that which arose from the Court of Criminal Appeal, they would not be obliged to appoint an Assistant-Director. All upon those benches desired economy, and they would do all they could to carry out the Government work with as little expenditure of public money as possible. Under these circumstances he thought his suggestion ought to be carried out, and that they should limit the work of the new official to the Court of Criminal Appeal, at any rate for a time. It would be perfectly easy to extend it afterwards if found necessary. There was one thing which always puzzled him when he looked upon the work of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. It always involved the creation of a new post for somebody. Not a single Bill they brought in but created a post for someone. He believed that was a very bad thing to do, because if there was afterwards any demand to reduce expenditure it was always met with indignation by the people who received the salaries. The hon. and learned Gentleman was an exceedingly able debater, and he had listened with a good deal of curiosity to hear what he would say about some of the salaries to be paid to these gentlemen, and what he estimated the total cost of the Department would be. But he had not said a single word about it, except that the money would be paid by Parliament. Of that they were all aware, it was about the only place where they could get money at the present moment; but if they went on in that way even Parliament would have no money to give. Before they consented to the Second Reading of the Bill he asked for some assurance from the hon. and learned Gentleman that he would limit its expenses as much as possible, and that for the time being he would limit the duties of the new official, the object of course being that they should not appoint Assistant Directors. According to the Bill, not only was there to be a Director of Public Prosecutions, but assistants, though there was nothing to show how many or how few. The assurance asked for, that the work would be limited in the way he suggested, was most reasonable and businesslike. Any great firm worked at first in a small way and waited to see how the business was going before they extended it. He hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman would give them that assurance. He hoped he would tell them what the salaries of the Director and his assistants were to be, what the total cost would be, and what answer he had to give to the Report read by his hon. friend. If these questions were satisfactorily answered, no doubt they would be very pleased to assent to the Second Reading.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said it was very much to be regretted that this Government continued the bad habit of previous Governments, drawn from both sides of the House, of hurrying legislation, and of saying that the Bill must be passed at once, the arrangements being such that they could not be carried out unless a new post was created. Not only did this Government pose as the friends of economy but as the friends of social reform, and he felt very strongly that before they authorised any further amount to be drawn from the Treasury for legal appointments the interests of social reform should be met. His hon. friends had emphasised the fact that the Attorney-General in his speech had not given the slightest indication as to whether the provisions of the Bill would result in a demand for £1,000 or £10,000 a year on the Exchequer, nor had they any notion how many appointments were to be made. Everything was left to the Treasury, and as far as he could see, once the Bill became law the House of Commons would lose all control over these legal officials. Ever since this Parliament had existed, the Treasury Vote had never once come up for discussion, so that once the Treasury got hold of the power to spend the money the House of Commons had lost all power of criticism or effective control. It was becoming a scandal, because the essence of the financial system had been each year that the House of Commons should criticise and control and direct the expenditure of the various public offices. He would be the last to grudge the hon. and learned Gentleman who now adorned the offices of Attorney-General and Solicitor-General the salaries which they enjoyed; he could not but think, however, that if they practised the economy which they emphasised so strongly on public platforms, and had regard to the votes which perhaps they themselves might have given when sitting on that side of the House, they would agree that some of the salaries necessary under this Bill should be taken from the fees and salaries which they enjoyed for their respective offices. He remembered in the last Parliament a heated debate and a division on the salaries of the Solicitor and Attorney-General. He had not had time to look up the records, but he would not be surprised if the present occupants of those offices both voted for the reduction of the salaries. He hoped they would take the proceedings of Parliament into account in that respect, and that this occasion would be seized to review the salaries of all the legal gentlemen connected with the Treasury. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for the City of London, that unless they could at this stage get full information as to the cost the Bill would involve it would be proper in the interests of economy, and having regard to the pledges which had been given by Gentlemen on both sides of the House, that they should not agree to the Bill.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Thirsk) said it was surely rather unusual in bringing in a Bill of this sort not to state exactly what the salaries were to be. In the case of the Scottish Land Bill the salaries of the new offices were stated, and surely that was far more for the convenience of the House in such circumstances, especially when there were Reports which showed that the particular office in question had been abolished very largely because of the charges which it imposed. At the time of that Report the services which it was now proposed to set up again imposed a charge of about £6,000 a year on the Exchequer, and the Report said that the Committee were convinced that that amount could be very materially reduced by the consolidation of the Departments. That would certainly lead him to vote against the Bill unless they had a satisfactory explanation. Why was it necessary to set up a separate Department? If the

Treasury work was as great as it was alleged to be it might have been met by the subsection which said that extra assistance could be provided. He would have thought there might have been far greater economy in appointing one or more assistants as might be necessary, keeping the matter under the control of the Solicitor to the Treasury, as head of the whole Department, than in setting up a new Department which was bound to involve additional expense beyond the salary of its chief official. If they had a satisfactory explanation of these points he would be prepared not to go into the division lobby against the Government, but pending that explanation he agreed that the position was unsatisfactory.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I do not want to prolong the debate, but I want to ask one or two questions of one or other of the learned Gentlemen opposite. I am afraid I do not entirely share the views of my colleagues on these benches with regard to the necessity for this Bill. I look upon it as a necessary corollary of the Bill passed last year for the setting up of a Court of Criminal Appeal. Whether or not the Act will entail very great expense is another question. I ventured to express the opinion last year when that Bill was being considered that the work under it would be enormous, and I thought hon. Gentlemen opposite rather belittled the amount of work in order that they might not incur the charge of having recklessly gone into increased expenditure. But I remember perfectly well, on the Second Reading of the Bill last year pointing out the very large number of cases which I thought would be raised under the Bill, and how nearly every criminal, especially the habitual criminal, the hardened offender, would take his chance of having a lighter sentence or having his case reversed. Therefore, I thought there would be a large amount of business and consequently a very considerable expenditure. The House passed that Bill last year; it was a very important Bill, devolving very important duties upon the Public Prosecutor, and therefore, although I was not entirely in favour of all the clauses of that Bill, I think that, having got it, in the interests of the country it ought to be carried out as well as it possibly can be. Therefore, it may be necessary for the Government to get an extremely efficient man to act as Public Prosecutor. In passing, may I express a hope that the present Solicitor to the Treasury, one of the very best public servants of the State, though I believe his time is getting rather short, may be able to start the proceedings under this measure, because there is in the country no man of greater experience than Lord Desart, and no man who could start the new machinery more efficiently or know more about the work. The Attorney-General in giving a clear explanation of the Bill explained how the Department of Solicitor to the Treasury was to be divided into two separate Departments, and he expressed the opinion with which I entirely agree, that it is necessary to preserve the position of King's Proctor. It might have been my own stupidity, but I did not gather whether the King's Proctor was to be in the new Public Prosecutor's Department, or to remain in the office of the Solicitor to the Treasury. Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentlemen will tell me that. At all events I am quite clear, both from my experience at the Home Office and from my somewhat longer experience at the Treasury, that it is really impossible to load the Solicitor to the Treasury, without further assistance, with any more work in connection with the Court of Criminal Appeal. The Department has been extremely hard worked for a long time, and it will be necessary to increase its staff unless you take some steps such as you are taking in this Bill. So that, although I know the Bill will increase the expenditure, you cannot complain of that so much to-day as you could last year. It was in giving assent to the Act of last year that we pledged ourselves to increased expenditure. To me it matters little whether it is spent in increasing the staff of the present Solicitor to the Treasury or whether you combine the two offices and divide the amount of money necessary under two separate heads. At all events I do not think it will make much difference to the amount of money to be spent. I hope the Secretary of State will be fortunate enough to secure the services of an extremely able man to set up the exceedingly difficult and important work involved. I hope the Solicitor-General will assure me on the two points I have put before him. I will not trouble the House further on this stage of the Bill, though there are two or three questions I wish to raise at greater length when we come to the Committee stage.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir SAMUEL EVANS, Glamorganshire, Mid.), who was indistinctly heard in the gallery, was understood to say that anybody who had had experience of Lord Desart would re-echo the words kindly spoken of him by the right hon. Gentleman. He was a most excellent public servant, and it would be a great loss to the State when it was no longer able to avail itself of his services. The chief dividing line between the two officers would be that the civil work would belong to the Treasury Solicitor, and the Criminal Department would be vested in the new office. He remembered that the right hon. Gentleman had prophesied last year that the work under the Criminal Appeal Bill would be very large indeed, and he agreed that it would be enormous. That necessitated that they should have a fresh Department to deal with the fresh work. Everybody who was in favour of the Criminal Appeal Bill had spoken very strongly last year against the possibility of any delay in the working of its provisions. It was of the utmost importance that people who had a right to appeal to the law as it now stood should have the right to go to trial as early as possible. For that purpose it would be well to arrange now for the setting up of machinery under the supervision and control of one man who would have the responsibility, so that when the Act came into force, as it would do on 18th April next, they would have it in order and there would be no delay. Reference had been made to the Report of 1884. It was quite true that the Report was made and was vouched for by the very eminent legal names to which the hon. Member for North Ayrshire had referred, but he had only one answer to make. It was that that Report was made twenty-four years ago, and since then they had all had time to be born again and to attain their majority. A great deal happened in twenty-four years, and the work of the Treasury Solicitor had enormously increased in connection with the Admiralty, the War Office, and every Department of the State. No public servant had much harder work than the man at the head of this branch; and now, with the enormous work which would devolve upon him under the Criminal Appeal Bill, it was absolutely necessary to make some provision of this kind. He would only say one word further with regard to the question of expense. First of all, in answer to the noble Lord who had cited an instance where the salaries were stated in the Bill, that measure was one in which Special Commissioners were appointed by the Act of Parliament itself. In this case they were merely creating new public servants and their salaries would be ascertained by the Treasury. It appeared to him that the proper time for discussing that would be upon the Resolution which they must have before going into Committee on the Bill. One thing that was certain was that if there was a desire for economy exhibited on the other side they would have assistance from hon. Members on the Government side, and between the watch-dogs on both sides of the House and the watch-dogs of the Treasury, he felt pretty sure the salaries of these gentlemen would not be excessive.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said it was no answer for the Attorney-General to tell them that opportunities would arise for discussing this question on some other stage. He refused to believe that no kind of estimate had been formed of the probable expense of the measure. They all knew how extremely visionary the opportunities of discussing money Resolutions were. Why was there such an unwillingness to produce the estimate of the probable cost? That was the one thing which the House was entitled to know before they were asked to read the Bill a second time. The discussions in Committee of Supply of the Vote for the Director of Public Prosecutions were not very easy, because they had on the one hand to guard against anything like a re-trying of the cases, and on the other hand against insinuating that in taking up or not taking up particular prosecutions he had been actuated by corrupt or scarcely less worthy motives. He did not see why the valuable protection afforded by Section 6 of the Act of 1879 was being repealed in the present Bill.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said it was not at all clear that the question of these salaries could be referred to on the Financial Resolution. The House would remember that on the consideration of the Scottish Land Bill it was held that the Land Courts and their officials could not be discussed. The Committee stage of the Bill might be taken in the small hours of the morning some time in July, and it would be much more convenient to have the matter discussed now. They ought to be given some information as to the number of these officers and their salaries.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Thursday.—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

CHILDREN BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): This measure was introduced in a speech so brief but yet so clear and succinct that it seems almost impossible to add now to that exposition. The Bill, nevertheless, is one of considerable complexity, and many of its provisions are of a novel character. The subject as a whole is essentially a non-party one, but one can see that considerable friction may arise at future stages of the Bill. The prospects on all sides at the present time are so favourable that we are hoping to secure a speedy passage of the Second Reading. There was a time in the history of this House when a Bill of this kind would have been treated as a most revolutionary measure; and, half a century ago, if such a measure had been introduced it would have been said that the British Constitution was being undermined. Now a Bill of this kind finds itself in smooth water from the outset. This measure is not the development of the political ideas of one party, but the gradual development of a quickened sense on the part of the community at large of the duty it owes to the children. Many high-minded men and women, and many philanthropic societies, have been working upon this subject, and of recent years one is glad to note a large development of scientific knowledge. All these facts, together with two notable things which have recently occurred, namely, the Report of the Committee on Physical Training and the Report of the Commission on Physical Deterioration, have made out the case for this Bill from no political point of view, but rather as a gathering together of the general sentiments of the country. Consolidation under this Bill has been carried out on the usual lines, and the Government hope that the effect of that consolidation will be found to be useful to all local authorities in the administration of the Act. There are one or two points to which I desire to call the attention of the House, not referring to the consolidation part but to the new clauses.

I wish to make one or two brief observations with regard to those provisions of the Bill which deal with the protection of infant life. One new provision occurs in Clause 3. If hon. Members at their leisure will peruse Section 3, they will find very important provision in the statute with reference to the subject of places where children are housed. Hitherto, this business of baby farming has been carried on with insufficient attention from the State, but there is provision under Section 3 applicable to the case of children being housed under dangerous or insanitary conditions, where there is overcrowding, or where the person in charge of the child has been declared by the local authority to be unfit. I am bound to say that upon this head the Bill makes a much-needed advance, because those persons are disqualified for ever from being charged with the duty of carrying on the business of child farming under Head 2 of the Bill. The provisions as to the conviction for offences are so strong that in future if a baby farmer has been convicted of cruel treatment that baby-farmer is disqualified for ever from the possibility of carrying on a business of that kind. Then there are provisions dealing with the very serious cases of children who are burned or injured through being left in rooms with open fireplaces and the cases where children have lost their lives through overlying by the parent or the guardian. In those cases where it is established that any person in charge of a child so farmed has been guilty of any of these offences such person shall be disqualified from carrying on the business of child-farming. I think that the House will agree that in the interest of the State itself an emphatic provision of that kind in this Bill is certainly well warranted by the facts of the case. There is a provision in Section 5 which says that if these persons have been found guilty of negligence, cruelty, or drunkenness, or if they have been found in a condition of inebriety in such a way as to be marked down in their reports, it will have the further effect of disqualifying these people from carrying on the business of the bringing up of children. That is so far as regards the protection

There are a series of provisions, from 13 to 15, which are, I admit, somewhat novel, and those have reference to the prevention of cruelty. It is right that we should call attention to these, because undoubtedly they are new provisions. There is one provision in Section 13, which substantially is this: If a child loses its life in consequence of being left in a room with an open grate, an offence is committed against that section, so that, although it appears at first a strong interference with the liberty of the subject, there may be a guarantee in future that all children shall have the protection of protected fires in the room in which they are left by the parent or guardians for the time being. These things seem, on the bold black type of the Bill, somewhat strong orders, but there are records in regard to these matters of the most alarming character. My colleagues from Scotland will remember that only the other day, in Edinburgh, a terrible case occurred. I will narrate to the House what the case was. In one of the large tenements in the Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, a part called Milne's Court, there was a poor woman, Mrs. Denholm, who had three children. She left them there in the attic of a six storey building. To keep company with these children a Mrs. Brown left an infant of three years of age. They went off to visit Leith. There is no record whether this was a right visit or a wrong one. No doubt there is nothing to suggest that it was anything but in the ordinary course of their life. But shortly after they left, this attic room was discovered to be on fire, and what happened was this. It was broken into and one of these little children was found dead, another was brought out from the room in a dying condition and carried to the infirmary, but it expired before it reached there. A third child, after great exertion, was discovered in the burning bed, and finally the fourth child was discovered while they were raking out the embers of the almost extinguished fire. The corpse was found among the débris of the conflagration. That is a case for which there is no provision under the ordinary law, apart from the case of manslaughter, or, as we call it in Scotland, culpable homicide. Cases like that would fall under this clause to which we hope the House will address itself with emphasis and not with undue criticism as to interference with the liberty of the subject. Here is a case in which four little children are left in a house apparently without protection and really in great danger. There was an open fire almost in their midst, they began to play, no doubt, with the embers in the grate, and the result was that in a few hours the four infants lost their lives. I think it is not too much to put on the humblest in the community the care of infants, who, as I have said, are citizens of the State, obligations such as will prevent lamentable accidents of that kind. I will only on this head say in conclusion that the statistics in regard to it are of the most overwhelming character. I understand that in one year no fewer than 1,600 infant deaths arose from this cause. I trust that I have made clear to the House that this provision is well worthy of support. There is a provision with reference to the subject of infants' overlying by the mother or the woman sleeping with them.

In that case also the figures are of an appalling character. The House will hardly believe that in London alone in a single year 1,600 deaths have arisen from that cause. That is an alarming statistic and we think it well warrants Clause 14 of the Bill.

As to Clause 15 I feel bound to say that I do not think it requires argument. If any person having the custody, charge or care of a girl between the ages of seven and sixteen, allows a girl to reside in a brothel, from that moment an offence shall be held to have been committed, because it is a social moral and legal offence. It is equivalent in the legal degree to cruelty of the most hateful kind. We provide in the Bill the power of inspection, not only of homes, which is all-important, but of the institutions in which there may be a combination of the agencies working in the interest of children. That provision says that the governors of these institutions shall have a certain amount of surveillance on the question of inspection. There are in regard to the protection of the lives of children, persons who, apart from places, want supervision. Not exactly in this portion of the Bill, but later on, the responsibility for children will be continued in the case of a deserting husband. I will explain to the House how that matter stands at present. There would be great danger of any prosecution of a deserting husband failing on the ground that he personally had nothing to do with the cruelty, neglect, or wrong committed to the children in his home. Now the law, we hope, will step in and say that if a man deserts his wife and family he must consider the case of the children so left behind. In the ordinary case his desertion is for a justifiable cause, namely, on account of a drunken wife, and what we say is that the law ought emphatically to declare that if a man justifiably deserts his wife, he shall not thereby plead that as an excuse for leaving the children to her sole and unaided care. If he deserts his wife and family, it is all the more important to continue his responsibility for those little ones who were left without proper care. I think I have exhausted the personal aspect of the question so far as the children are concerned.

There is a part of the Bill which may cause probably a little trouble. That is the portion beginning with Section 37, as to juvenile smoking. I confess that when I read these clauses myself I did think they were going somewhat far, and I daresay that anyone who has not gone fully into the records will come at once to that opinion. I found it to be my duty to go fully into the question, and I must say that the investigations conducted by the authority of Parliament on this subject are of rather a serious kind. As this matter may be the subject of much discussion, will the House permit me to refer to the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration? In that Report these sentences occur, and this is really the substantial foundation for these provisions in the Bill—

> "There appear to be two ways of dealing with the matter which might be of good effect and could be made the subject of a very simple Act of Parliament: (1) To prohibit the sale of tobacco and cigarettes to children below a certain age. All the witnesses were agreed in advocating this step, but there was some difference of opinion as to the age which should be selected. The Committee think that it should at least be sixteen. (2) To prohibit the sale of tobacco and cigarettes in sweet shops and other shops frequented by children."

But there was a very important Report presented by the Royal Commission on Physical Training. That is a thing which hits us all, for that Commission had in view not only the actual conditions so far as children are concerned, but the conditions from the public point of view, almost from the Imperial point of view, as to what was to be the result to the State itself of having children brought up under habits of this kind. That Royal Commission reported in these terms—

> "Tobacco smoking before maturity is reached has a most prejudicial effect on physical development, and this evil and increasing practice cannot be too strongly denounced."

We have made this effort, and we commend it to the House, hoping that it will have a beneficial effect.

I now come for a moment to a very thorny branch of the question, though we are not dealing with it for the first time, namely, the reformatory and industrial schools question. That has been the subject of legislation for a period of over forty years. Since 1866 right up to the present there has been a crop of legislative effort, sometimes culminating in statutes and sometimes not, on this very complicated subject, and the House will understand that this Bill links together the whole scheme of reformatory and industrial schools in the most useful manner. I call particular attention to one point which I think, though I am not sure, is a new development, and that is the auxiliary home. At present it sometimes happens that there is no accommodation in an industrial school for children who ought to be sent there in ordinary circumstances; in such cases there is power in the Bill to add to the local or national equipment by way of auxiliary homes. These institutions are annexed, so to speak, to the general scheme of reformatory and industrial schools in the country. On all these questions of the treatment of children, whether by imprisonment, penal servitude, reformatory treatment, or industrial treatment, may I say that the keystone of the Bill is to be found in Section 96, in which it is emphatically and broadly insisted that no child under fourteen years of age shall be subject to imprisonment. That is a strong and well-warranted step, and especially the following section, which provides that no young person under sixteen years of age shall be liable to be sentenced to penal servitude. If the House would wish to see at one glance what is to be substituted for the old hard and fast cast-iron methods of treating children, they will find it a very excellent conspectus of the new system under its various heads in Section 98. In the first place, it is perfectly clear that no magistrate with Section 98 before him will ever dream of disposing of child cases in anything like the old harsh system which is to be abolished by this measure. The magistrate has placed before him a series of alternatives, the object being to treat these children not by way of punishing them—which is no remedy—but with a view to their reformation. There is suggested discharging the child under recognisance, or under the supervision of a probation officer—a most excellent new scheme—or sending the offender to an industrial school or to a reformatory school or by ordering him to be whipped. Personally I do not care about the whipping alternative, but I do care a great deal about Sub-sections (*g*) to (*j*)—by ordering the offenders to pay a fine, damages, or costs, or by ordering the parent or guardians of the offender to pay a fine, damages, or costs. We think the latter is a most commendable provision. It is well that parents or guardians should know in future that their responsibility is not ended when they send their children into the streets or leave them to follow their own devices, but that they are to be subject to punishment of a fine, damages, and costs at the order of the magistrate; or, where that would be no good whatever, there is the further provision of committing the child to a place of detention instead of to imprisonment. A wonderful change initiated by this Bill is the sending the child to a place of detention instead of imprisonment. It must be remembered that the moment a little one is brought into Court at present it is sent to prison to await its trial. Under the scheme of the Bill there are places where the child is to be detained and accommodation provided for it in all cases of remand. Therefore, the House will see that there is to be an end to that system of real cruelty—for it is real cruelty—of sending a child to gaol and making it a gaol-bird even before trial. All that is ended by this section, which we think the local authorities will work well. Children of from twelve to fourteen year of age will go to industrial schools. As a Scotsman, in opening this Bill I would like to make one remark with reference to the case of what I call tramp or wandering children. The reason I make this observation is that we have the most beautiful parts of the United Kingdom, and probably in Europe, very often infested by this class of child, going about under the charge of not the regular style of gipsy, but of real wandering vagabond tramp creatures. The children are in their charge; they go from parish to parish. No local authority can get hold of them, for before a magistrate's order can be put in operation they are off to another parish, probably to another part of the country. What we have done is, we take possession of these children in this sense; we say that if the parents or guardians have no settled home or if the parents or guardians are unfit to take care of the children, then the children are to be brought before a magistrate and sent to an industrial school. We emphatically make it clear that the very fact of wandering about, not begging alone, but of not being in a condition in which they would be compelled to send their children to school if they were localised under ordinary circumstances in a particular parish—that of itself will bring them within the purview of this provision. Let there be no false sentiment about this. With every admiration for the genius of George Borrow, I think that he never did a worse service to this country than by writing "Lavengro," in which he praises the wandering gipsy life until it made well-disposed citizens come to think that there was something beautiful in it. There is nothing of the kind. There is nothing but squalor, and sometimes very little else than immorality in the life to which these children are brought up. It is high time that these children should be rescued from squalor and shame. I once discussed this point with a gillie in the Highlands who put the whole thing in a nutshell. The gillie used the illustration of the rabbit warren, and said: "If we would only seize hold of the young ones the old stock would soon die out, and so we would save these young people." The gillie agreed that the young vagrants were initiated from their earliest days into mal-practices, and that they should be sent to industrial houses, and if necessary, to reformatory schools. I would point out that the provision in regard to the supervision of young children in reformatory and industrial schools does not mean that that supervision ends with their incarceration there, but continues until they reach the age of nineteen. We think that that will be in the highest degree helpful to the children. There may be in some persons' minds a doubt as to the advisability of the State interfering with the responsibility of the parents: but that is an argument more familiar in former days than now. This Bill, however, very firmly declares certain new aspects of parental duty which must be brought home to the parents of neglected children. First, the parents must contribute such sum as is reasonable to maintain the children; secondly, where the child is sent to a day industrial school the parent or such person as is liable to maintain him must contribute such sum as is reasonable towards his industrial training and meals in the school; thirdly, when a child is brought before a Court the parents are convened to the Court in order that they may see what is the result of neglect, and that personal responsibility may be brought home to them when the child falls into crime; and fourthly, if a fine is imposed, the fatuous precedent of fining the child is got rid of, and the parent is fined. These provisions show that while we have been looking after the children we have not been allowing the persons primarily responsible to escape their responsibility to the State. There is a part of the Bill which is a novelty, and that is the part which provides for the institution of separate juvenile Courts. Since 1863 this system has been established in the United States, and twenty-one States have now adopted the principle. In Canada it has been adopted since 1884, and in South Australia since 1895. In all these cases the record is unfailing that the effect of separate treatment of the children under more sympathetic conditions, apart from the ordinary grimy surroundings of a Criminal Court, has been wholly helpful, and the children being often accompanied with much watchful care on the part of Court officials the result has been a very large diminution of youthful crime. I think that that example from our dominions across the seas is worth following. Of course this Bill is just a part, though a large part, of the development of social reform in this country. The Party opposite is entitled—and I have never denied it—to the highest credit for their legislation in this matter and for the Act of 1901, which is a notable charter of the children's rights. But since then, provision has been made for the medical inspection of school children, for feeding children at school, for the establishment of probation officers and the notification of births—

a subject not remote from that now under consideration. And now here is a Bill to prevent the cruelty of these children entering the ranks of crime. I therefore think that the House is entitled to be satisfied that we are making steady advance. I am quite well aware that no one who has gone through the statistics of juvenile crime, and of the resulting social misery, but must acknowledge that notwithstanding what we have done much remains that is saddening. The only consolation we can have is in the historical reflection of what has been done within the last century. Just take the description which Sydney Smith gave of one particular trade, that of the chimney sweep. His essay did more for those children than the Report of the Committee of both Houses, because he there described the awful conditions of these young children in that trade. He pointed out how they came with advertisements to the doors of people, and on the advertisement was printed "Little boys for small flues," and he gave a picture of small boys climbing up chimneys with bloody hands and knees, and sometimes sticking in the chimney and being pulled out, sometimes dead and sometimes suffering. That sort of thing existed in one particular trade, and if you take for decade after decade from 1819 up to the present time the record of your factory legislation, it would be the same most gratifying record of progress. It is only necessary to remark that well into the last century there were provisions under which it was possible for children under the age of nine to be allowed to labour in factories, and Robert Owen, that most distinguished social reformer, gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords or of the House of Commons, I do not know which, to the effect that it was the common practice for children of six years of age to labour for thirteen hours in the factory, and that the parishes sent all their surplus children there, and so relieved the ratepayers of the parish. All these things I state for the purpose of urging Members of the House not to be too depressed, for we are making progress. It is still within the memory of men now living that little children of very tender years went down into the mines and were chained to the hutches, and worked under conditions which are appalling in the sight of God and man. All these things have been happily abolished, and therefore I beg the House to remember that at every stage of reform in that condition of things to which I am referring there has always been the grumble, "Are you not going too far?" No, Mr. Speaker, we are not going too far. We want to say to the child that if the world, or the world's law, has not been his friend in the past it shall not be now. We say that it is the duty of this Parliament and that this Parliament is determined to lift, if possible, and rescue him, to shut the prison door and to open the door of hope. I know quite well that in all cases of social reform you must get beyond the personal question to the deeper questions of the land, and of the drink, and, unhappily, the moment you get to them you are in the region of party controversy. And, of course, there is the deeper root difficulty which rests in human character. But apart from that we are dealing with human beings whose fate is upon us unless we interpose, and it is in a spirit of helpfulness and rescue that the Government introduce this measure.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Debate arising.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): So far as this measure is one of consolidation of course we raise no objection to the Second Reading. I recognise that the law as to children is spread over a large number of Acts of Parliament, which are difficult to follow and understand, and certainly need consolidation. But this Bill is not only a measure of consolidation; it is in many respects one of Amendment and extension, and it certainly requires, as regards these new clauses, very considerable consideration and scrutiny. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Home Office, who gave, I cordially acknowledge, a most clear and lucid statement of the Bill on its introduction, admitted that a measure of this size and scope, containing 119 clauses, and consisting of 72 pages, could not be expected to pass into law in a crowded session, unless it met with general consent, so that the Government had, in preparing the measure, to exclude as far as possible every subject of a controversial character. There are many subjects which many Members of this House would have desired to see included in this Bill to make the Bill a comprehensive measure of codification of the law relating to children and dealing with the time of employment in factories and workshops, street trading, and children in public-houses. But I am bound to say that all these questions would have led to considerable controversy and would have jeopardised the fate of the Bill, and probably the Government were wisely advised in excluding them from the present measure. Indeed, I am not sure as it is that the Government can hope that some of their amending clauses may not be considered controversial, or that they may not lead at all events to considerable discussion; but it was for them, of course, to settle the question whether the more extensive Amendments might be included, or whether it would have been wiser and safer to have curtailed the Bill to one of pure consolidation of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1897, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904, making only necessary amendments where those Acts have been found in practice to be ineffective. The Bill, although nominally and chiefly a consolidation Bill, contains new enactments and Amendments of the existing law, some of which are quite novel, and some very far-reaching. New offences are in some cases created, and you have for the first time the right of entry granted to private homes and institutions and your new inspectors are given novel powers. You presume that parents know exactly what their children are doing and you punish them for their errors. But, at all events, there is one principle of the Bill which I for one cordially endorse, which has been alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and that is the wider enforcement of parental authority. The parent is to be brought into Court when the child transgresses and will, as far as possible, be made to pay the fine for his child, which he has neglected to train. That is rightly at variance with the socialist doctrine, with which we in this part of the House have no sympathy, that the moment a child comes into the world the State is to be responsible for it. I am delighted to think that there is that recognition of parental authority within the four corners of the Bill. It is perfectly true that nearly every hon. Member in this House agrees in the principle of the Bill, and therefore the criticisms which must be addressed to the House are chiefly or largely upon Committee points, but under the new practice which prevails in this House of sending every measure upstairs, I do not think the Government can grumble if some of the criticisms made to-day are criticisms which might have been fully as well made in Committee, because this is after all the sole opportunity which the bulk of hon. Members who take a great interest in this Bill will have of considering it. I would therefore venture to offer a few criticisms of certain clauses of the Bill in which I feel considerable interest, and I promise the right hon. Gentleman I will not detain him at any undue length. There are also other points in regard to which I wish to elicit information. There is one part or point in the Bill which I think may lead to difference of opinion; it relates to the Infant Life Protection Act, which excludes the inspection of "one nurse-child homes." As the House will remember, the Infant Life Protection Act of 1897 exempted from inspection those persons who receive one nurse-child and not more than one child in return for weekly or periodical payments and not for a lump sum payment, and this Bill proposes the same exemptions. The Under-Secretary certainly told us the other day that a Select Committee would be appointed to consider this question, and that they would consider it early in the session, and report their conclusions, so that if they found for an alteration, or rather that "one-child" homes should be inspected, such proposals could in Committee be inserted in the Bill. I have reason to believe that that Report is nearing a conclusion, and to-day, possibly, the Chairman of the Committee, if he speaks, may be able to clear up the point as to what the Committee think, and then the Under-Secretary may say whether it is the intention of the Government to incorporate the findings of the Committee in this Bill. Although there is a great deal to be said in favour of such inspection on the one hand, yet for my own part I see considerable objections to it on the other. If any such inspection be insisted upon you always run the risk of closing some of the very best and most comfortable homes, because there are some women who make the kindest and best possible mothers, who do not care, and I am certain their husbands do not care, that the privacy of their homes should be interrupted, and that there should be that sort of suspicion created against them which such inspection is always liable to create. I was much interested in this question some years since in connection with the question of boarding-out, and it certainly was the experience of those who worked in my part of the world that those who received one child only were more careful and considerate, and that cruelty and neglect were entirely absent from their homes. These homes are not too numerous, and I think it would be a pity if you ran any risk of closing a home where the child has the advantage of being brought up with other foster children as they are and in a respectable home which they will long remember without any taint of the poorhouse or any of the inconveniences which in after life attach, and unfairly attach, to the reputation of a child who has been brought up in the poor house. I wish to ask the question whether there is any further information on that point, but as I say, the Chairman of the Committee, who have considered their Report, may speak and furnish it possibly. Then as to the begging clause. It has an addendum in Subsection 2, which is a new enactment. It throws the onus of proof on the person in charge of the child to show that he did not allow, and did his best to prevent, the child being in the street to beg, and I should like to know whether experience has shown the Under-Secretary the necessity of this measure, as I can see cases of hardship, considering the conditions in which many of our poor are housed, and the conditions in which they live in our large towns. There may be considerable hardship in inflicting these penalties on the poorer people. It is not as if they lived under better or happier conditions. Over some of the children reared in crowded thoroughfares where the accommodation is extremely poor, it is very hard for the parents to keep an efficient control, and I must say you are creating undue hardship for the parents in making them responsible as you do. With regard to Clause 13, which deals with the case of children exposed to the risk of burning, I wish to ask whether it has ever been considered possible to have inspectors in order to see if fires are guarded, because the penalty here is only the effect of a warning, and is only inflicted after the unfortunate child has been burnt. So far as the parent is concerned no doubt that is quite right, but so far as the child is concerned you lock the stable door after the horse is stolen. Then with regard to overlying—Clause 14. This is a new enactment, and I think the penalty is a very heavy one to impose upon an unfortunate mother who accidentally overlies her child. This overlying is largely due to the bad accommodation these people have. An unfortunate family with other children may only have one room, and parents may not be in a position to buy bassinettes, or cots or anything for the baby. It may also be only possible in winter to keep the baby warm by taking it into bed, and if by an accident of this kind the baby's life is sacrificed, and in many cases it is mere accident, probably no person is more distressed than the mother. I think therefore the penalty is far too high. I think every care should be taken to persuade the parents to be more careful in the charge of their children, but this is too heavy a penalty to threaten them with when an unfortunate overlying takes place. I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that 1,500 deaths occurred in this way. Does he mean in London?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): No; England and Wales.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS: That is what I thought. So far as London is concerned, I fully admit the urgency of the problem of the infantile death-rate. While the death-rate has fallen greatly during the last fifty years, infantile mortality remains the same, and we find that it is greatest amongst the poorer classes and in the crowded districts. I find by the figures in 1841 and 1850 in London the infant mortality was 157 of every 1,000 born, and that in 1900 it had risen to 160, whereas the death-rate for the whole country is less than it was before. It is a matter of common notoriety that infantile mortality varies with the house accommodation, and therefore I hope it may not be necessary to press this rather heavy penalty in these cases. I have no doubt the Under-Secretary of State has made very careful inquiries into this question. I notice the opinion given by one of the best known London Coroners upon this subject. At an inquest at Battersea, the coroner, Mr. Troutbeck, in summing up, said—

> "That in that district of London they had been engaged for some years in endeavouring to find genuine cases of overlying, but so far their search had been unfruitful. In many cases the children found dead in bed with their parents on careful examination had failed to show that there had been any interference with their breathing."

The coroner went on to say—

> "In the course of my experience I have never come across such a case, and I doubt whether such cases ever existed."

I am certain the Home Office have carefully considered this question before they committed themselves the remedies proposed in this Bill. But it appears there are some well-known authorities in London who seem to doubt the accuracy of these figures. I do not think, although it is a new enactment, that anyone can object to Clause 15, which inflicts penalties upon anyone in charge of a girl between the ages of seven and sixteen for allowing that girl to reside in a brothel. That is a clause that everyone will agree with. Clause 22, dealing with visitation of children's homes and institutions, is a most important clause. Under the existing law there is no right of entry to such homes or institutions. I agree that it is necessary that there should be, but I hope the Home Office will consider the very delicate nature of such inspection as well as the discretion of the inspectors who are to carry it out. Many of these institutions are religious institutions and belong to various religious denominations, and I foresee very considerable difficulty in carrying out these provisions unless a very great discretion is used and the inspectors are the official inspectors of the Home Office or are people of some authority whose salaries will be placed upon the Estimates in order that the House may have some hold upon them. I have only one point I wish to raise on the 4th part of the Bill, that is with regard to Clauses 43 to 48. Those clauses deal solely with reformatory and industrial schools, and are all practically consolidation clauses. The changes made, if any, are small and chiefly administrative. I will not trouble the House with any remark upon them except to express my approval of the fact that the age of committal has not been raised. Sixteen is quite old enough, and youths or young women above that age should certainly not be mixed with boys and girls. With regard to the last part of this Bill dealing with juvenile offenders, I am sure we all agree that child offenders should be kept separate from adult offenders. Boys and girls under sixteen years of age should not be kept in prison or even mixed in the police courts with older criminals. I gathered that the right hon. Gentleman was going to establish police courts for juvenile offenders only in all parts of the country. I know they have been successfully established in Glasgow and Birmingham. In London children are still tried at the ordinary police courts but at a separate hour, and are not allowed to mix with criminals or to hear the other cases going on. I wish to know whether this system is to continue in London or whether separate police courts are to be opened in various districts. There are two objections to that being done, one, the great and unnecessary expense, and the other, that if you have only two Children's Courts for London, you will have to bring the children very great distances to the place of trial. I think it would be more satisfactory and less expensive if the present system were continued. The Under-Secretary of State said that he intended to require the police authorities all over the country to provide places of detention to which children could be committed or remanded. In many towns I believe such places already exist, but in others where they do not a great burden would be thrown on the ratepayers if they were called upon all over England to erect these places of detention. If this large expense is to take place, I should like to know whether the hon. Gentleman does not consider it would be fair that the Treasury should bear a portion of the cost, and whether the cost of the children committed to these places should not be defrayed by the Treasury as it now is when children are committed to prison. The right hon. Gentleman said also that they proposed to appoint a special children's magistrate to visit in turn a circuit of Courts. If that is only in London I have nothing to say against it, but my experience is that the greatest possible attention is given to children's cases by the present stipendiary magistrates, against whose humanity and fairness to the children nothing can be said. I should like to know whether it is the intention of the Secretary of State to deal merely with the children in London in this way; whether the magistrate is to wander from Court to Court or whether he is to sit in one or two places in the centre of London to which all the child offenders in London will be brought. With regard to the juvenile cigarette smokers, I cannot help thinking that, although you might prevent retail dealers from supplying small children with cigarettes yet at the same time there are many provisions in the Bill, arrests by the police, search for cigarettes, and others, which are in the nature of grandmotherly legislation and which would probably lead to a good many laughable scenes of constables pursuing small boys who would drop their cigarettes in running away. Such scenes would not tend to support the dignity of the law or the efficient administration of the Act. I am perfectly aware that other countries have found it desirable to pass laws in this matter, and I am perfectly aware that the Committee on Physical Deterioration recommended some legislative remedy for this child smoking. If I recollect aright, a Committee of the House of Lords too, last year specially considered this point, and came to the unanimous conclusion that legislation was desirable. I am only criticising some of the proposals which have been made; I think that the prohibition of sale to children below a certain age is certainly the right one, and it is one to which I raise no objection. I think that some of the other provisions of the clause will not tend to good administration of the law which the hon. Member desires to pass. Another point with which I am in sympathy is the entire abolition of child imprisonment, but I think that that is a provision which requires very careful consideration. I am all against the imprisonment of children, but experienced chairmen of quarter sessions will back me up when I say that there are some cases in which it is almost impossible to provide a proper deterrent to certain habitual criminals among children without resort to some sort of imprisonment or detention. So far as the proposals for the separation of the child criminal from the adult criminal is concerned, I entirely approve of it. With the exception of certain clauses which I think require careful consideration, so far as I am concerned the hon. Gentleman will have no difficulty in regard to the passage of this measure.

*MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch) said he had been a Member of the London education authority and had been closely connected with industrial schools for the last ten years. Speaking with that experience, he gave the Bill a very hearty welcome indeed. The right hon. Gentleman who had spoken last had referred to the special Courts for children, and had mentioned the particular case of London, asking whether the work was to be taken from the hands of the magistrates in the Metropolis and given to a special magistrate appointed for the purpose. He yielded to no one in his admiration of the way in which the magistrates of London had done their work; nevertheless, he welcomed no part of the Under-Secretary's statement with more gratitude than that in which he spoke of the establishment of Courts at remand homes in London, and the appointment of a special magistrate to them. He welcomed that proposal not merely because it took children away from the undesirable surroundings of the Police Court, but also because he believed that it would be a great thing to get some unity of treatment of children who had fallen into crime. He believed that it was acknowledged that the best way of diminishing crime in the country was to deal judiciously and kindly with children and young persons when they first went wrong; and for that purpose he attached the greatest possible value to the appointment of a sympathetic magistrate who would deal with all children on the same line. The Metropolitan magistrates, whatever their merits might be, and they were very great, had no certain unity of principle in dealing with the questions which affected juvenile criminals. One magistrate would be very anxious to send boys to industrial schools, and another would think it almost wicked to shut them up for years in an industrial school. Another magistrate might be very fond of using the birch. In one Court, for example, thirteen children in one week divided ninety-eight strokes of the birch between them. The birch might be an excellent thing for some of those children, but he could not believe that it was an equally good thing for the whole of the thirteen. Other magistrates thought a great deal of the ratepayers' pocket, and for that reason refused to send boys to the industrial schools. He thought, therefore, that it would be a good thing if they could get one magistrate in London who would look on all the cases alike and try to evolve the really best method in which to deal with these child offenders. If this was necessary in London it was still more necessary in the provinces, because he was glad to say that as far as London was concerned practically no children were sent to prison. He found that in Birmingham, in the year 1904, as many as 166 children were sent to gaol, whereas in 1907, after the establishment of a children's Court, the number had fallen to twenty. The returns for Newcastle, about half as big as Birmingham, in 1905–6, showed that 159 children were sent to goal, and in 1906–7 the number was still up to 120. What he wanted the House to remember was that prison left a stigma on the children, and, furthermore, short terms of imprisonment were the very worst things possible for children, because after the first term the other terms did not act as a deterrent in any way, and they familiarised a child with prison life. Therefore, he was extremely glad to hear the Under-Secretary state that they were to have a peripatetic magistrate in London who would go round the different remand homes to hear the children's cases. Another good point in the Bill was the increase of parental responsibility. His experience with regard to industrial schools in London was that in a great number of cases the parents deliberately attempted to get their children sent to industrial schools. When they got little mites of eight or nine years of age charged with being beyond parental control, it showed that undoubtedly, as the law stood, there was not sufficient parental responsibility when their children got into trouble. Of course the parent was very glad to get rid of his child, though he must say that it was for the good of the child that he should be sent to an industrial school where he was trained and had a chance afterwards of employment in some trade that was found for him. The boy of the industrial school had a better chance than the child of the ordinary elementary school. Still he was very glad that under the Bill there was provision to bring home to the parents responsibility for their children, and they would not have so many cases as they had had in the past of parents getting their children sent away and the ratepayers often being charged with whole families. There were one or two points in which the Bill, he thought, might be improved. With regard to that part of it dealing with the prevention of cruelty to children, he was very glad that the law was to be strengthened in that direction. He would like to see the parent made liable if, through neglect to give his child reasonable medical attendance, he seriously injured the child in mind or body. He believed that that was a bold proposition to make, but his experience in connection with the cripples' school, and other special schools in London, went to show that cases could be multiplied in which children had been crippled for life because the parents, though repeatedly warned, had refused to give them proper medical attendance. He could cite cases to the House in which children had become blind, because the parents, though repeatedly warned, had refused to have the simplest operation performed. He could give examples where children had been made deaf for life in the same way. With the medical inspection which had been established under the Act of last year, he could not help thinking that this Bill might be strengthened so that parents, on being warned, after medical inspection at the school, that serious bodily harm would result to their children if they did not take steps to get them attended to, should, in the event of that warning being disregarded, come within the arm of the law. A further point to which he wished to call attention was that under the Bill as it stood, a child of twelve years of age, convicted of stealing, was to be sent to a reformatory school. Experience showed that the age of twelve was too young to send a child to a reformatory school, and that between the age of twelve and fourteen an industrial school was all that was necessary. It was said that managers of industrial schools would probably object to receiving children who had been convicted of stealing, but he knew that there were managers of industrial schools who were perfectly willing to receive children of that character. The superintendent of an industrial school in London had told him that the children who had been convicted of stealing were, if anything, rather better than the children sent to the school for wandering and begging, and so forth; he said that in one respect they had rather more go in them. The magistrates actually recognised that twelve was too young an age to send a child to the reformatory school. Frequently in London the magistrate varied the charge from theft to one of being beyond control; they got round the Act in that way, and sent the child to an industrial school. Seeing that that was the experience of the magistrates, he thought that the Bill might be made sufficiently elastic so as to leave it to the discretion of the magistrate to send a child of between twelve and fourteen years of age, convicted of stealing, to an industrial school, if he preferred to do so. There was another point he would be very glad to see in the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the clause dealing with girls found in brothels. Under the Bill a girl of fourteen could be taken from those surroundings and sent to an industrial school. He would like to make a plea for the girl between fourteen and sixteen, perhaps the most dangerous age of all. As the law stood at present she went back to her parents when they came out of prison, and was exposed to every sort of the worst kind of temptation. He thought the Bill might provide that a girl of that age residing under those undesirable conditions should be committed to some person or institution willing to take charge of her, or in the last resort, if she was not of good moral character, she might be sent to a reformatory school. It was a serious blot on the Bill at present that it made no provision for girls of that age. Another point to which he wished to draw attention was the provision with regard to vagrant children. He would like to be told whether these provisions referred to children who were in caravans. He knew they did not refer to children in barges. Children in caravans really got very little education indeed. There was a case the other day under the London education authority of children living in caravans at the World's Fair. There were 24 children of whom twenty over nine years of age were unable to read or write. There was, at any rate, a *prima facie* case for inquiry as to whether caravan children should not be brought under the Bill. He could not see, as the Bill stood at the present moment, that there was really any obligation for local education authorities either to establish industrial schools themselves or to enter into agreements with industrial schools for children to be sent to them. That was a matter which was really of the utmost importance, because the larger number of the local authorities throughout England had entirely neglected their duties in that respect. Around London hardly any education authority had an industrial school of its own or an agreement with other industrial schools. Constantly they got before them on a committee on which he sat records of children who wandered in from outside districts and finally after various convictions in their old districts were convicted of something or other in London. They made inquiry as to what the local authority was doing, and they found that it had never put the Industrial Schools Act in force, that it had no schools and no agreements with schools. If they were going to deal with this matter seriously it was absolutely essential that it should be made obligatory on every local authority either to possess an industrial school of its own or at any rate to enter into an agreement with industrial schools for the reception of its children. After all, these were not very large points. He wished once more to say with what gratitude they who were engaged in industrial school work in London received this Bill and what very great good they believed would result from it.

MR. ATHERLEY - JONES (Durham, N.W.) said he had a Bill on the Paper dealing with the department that the Bill of the Government covered, especially in relation to the topic to which his hon. friend who had last spoken had drawn attention. He entirely concurred in the general expression of congratulation which had been extended to the Government in respect of the Bill. During the long time that he had been in the House of Commons he did not think there had been any measure which was calculated to produce more general, though perhaps ultimate, good on the community. It was a subject to which he had long given attention, and although he thought the Bill was open to amendment on matters of detail, generally speaking its principle was perfectly sound, and although in some respects it travelled in novel directions from the point of view of precedent, yet on the whole it was legitimate and reasonable. He could not help referring to what had been said by the late Home Secretary. He agreed that the proposals with respect to the punishment of women guilty of causing the death of children by overlying were far too drastic. He had made some careful inquiries from medical men in the poorer districts of London and some of our large towns—men who had very large experience in respect of attendance on the poor, and considerable knowledge of these cases of overlying, and they assured him that the proportion of cases due to culpable negligence on the part of the parents was wholly infinitesimal, and that the misfortune was due almost entirely if not exclusively to the lack of proper and adequate domestic arrangement of the poor man's house. It savoured somewhat of cruelty to add to the torture of the loss of her child by bringing the mother before a police court and exposing her to a penalty for negligence. He knew that that portion of the Bill had been conceived with the most humane intentions by his right hon. friend, but he trusted he would give further consideration to that point. Another quession which savoured of the ludicrous was the power given to police officers to confiscate the tobacco of children found smoking or about to smoke in the streets. That was a novel, and to his mind, an unreasonable proposition. The age up to which this confiscatory process was to be allowed was sixteen years, and to expose high spirited boys, as the majority of English boys happily were, to the ignominy of having themselves waylaid by police and their tobacco confiscated was to his mind most unreasonable. That was a matter which ought to receive further consideration. These were perhaps matters of detail for Committee. There were, however, two points which lay at the root of the Bill. Clause 56, singular to state, was an almost slavish reproduction of Clause 14 of the Consolidating Bill of 1866. Under that clause there were enumerated conditions of childhood which imposed upon those so inclined the duty of rescue work—if the child was a beggar or a wanderer or frequented the company of reputed thieves or was living in a house frequented by prostitutes. At present, there were in this country 30,000 children, according to the best estimates, who fell within the four descriptions which he had just read to the House. In the county of Berkshire alone, there were nearly 3,000 children found in the casual wards in the course of one year. Last year there were nearly 800 children between twelve and fifteen years of age in prison. These were the children who should be saved by being placed in industrial schools or in some other place where they could be properly brought up. But what was the power under the statute, or under this intended statute? Any person might take one of these children so found and bring it before a magistrate. What had been the result of that? It was a purely voluntary act on the part of any officer of police, who had no greater powers than any private citizen. Further, the local authorities, as had been pointed out, had entirely neglected their duties in this respect. Of eighty-four main centres of population in this country twenty-two had provided no financial assistance whatever for dealing with the case of these destitute, abandoned, and wandering children. The Education Act of 1871, which had been wholly ignored in the present Bill, contained provisions enabling the education authority to provide industrial schools. That duty had been wholly neglected. What he suggested to the right hon. Gentleman, and it was the purpose of the Bill which stood in his name, was that that should be not a merely permissive but an obligatory duty, and that instead of saying "any person may," the words should be "a police or education officer shall," if children were found in that condition bring them before a justice so that he might give directions for them to be sent to industrial schools. The right hon. Gentleman had perhaps shrunk from putting that clause into the Bill, and he sympathised to some extent with him. It was well known that industrial school accommodation in this country was inadequate, though not everywhere. He was perfectly aware that in some places there had been rather a superfluity of industrial school accommodation. But, generally speaking, the supply of industrial schools in this country was inadequate. Over and over again a child had been found in the custody of depraved and drunken parents or of parents living by the most nefarious methods by which human beings could live. The mother or father or both might have been brought before the magistrates, and yet the justices were absolutely powerless to send the children of those parents to an industrial school, because the managers of industrial schools might object and refuse to take them in. Consequently those children were sent to the workhouse whilst the parents were in prison, and to those wretched and depraved parents when they came out of prison those children were restored. What was contemplated by a great philanthropist and reformer should be enacted in this Bill, and if there was no industrial school accommodation, there should be imposed upon the local authority the duty of providing it. He cared little about the plea that such a proposal would involve much expense, because he believed that the ultimate saving to the State by the rescuing of those children would repay a thousand-fold any temporary expenditure of that kind. He wanted to ask why should an orphan under Section 66, if its guardians were in prison, be deprived of the benefit of an industrial school? The words of the Act were "not being an orphan." He thought that was a reversal of the Act of 1866. The orphan child went to the workhouse and he urged upon the Government the desirability of removing those unhappy children from the taint of pauperism. If the children of criminals were to be sent to industrial schools, why in the name of common sense should the children of criminals who laboured under the disadvantage of being orphans be denied the benefit of industrial schools and be compelled to go to the workhouse? He had put those points before the House in no spirit of hostility to the Bill. If the present Government did nothing more than introduce and carry into law this measure with some eliminations, amendments, and additions, they would earn the gratitude of the country.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said that, after the brilliant speeches which had been delivered on this subject, it was a somewhat thankless task to say one word in criticism of the Bill. The Bill contained some 119 clauses, some of them exceedingly useful, but there were a large number of new clauses which should be discussed and considered, and many opposed. He did not think any legislation of the kind proposed could permanently be of use to the country if it went beyond the range of popular opinion and sentiment. Unless they could carry the people with them upon such a measure, they would probably do more harm than good. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted the remark of the gillie: "Seize the young ones and the old stock will die out." The gillie spoke of these people as if they were a warren of rabbits. Was that not the mistake the Bill was making? They had not heard a word about the position of the mother of the children in connection with these cases. He asked the House to consider seriously the position of those mothers, who were often hard-working people and had great difficulty in bringing up their family. Many of these clauses had been framed without any sympathy at all for working women of that kind. Clause 13 was extraordinarily drafted and was contrary to most of the ordinary principles of legislation. At the present moment it was not an offence to leave a child in a room with an open fireplace without a fireguard. The Bill did not make that offence a crime, but if the child managed to pull the kettle down and cause itself serious injury it was a criminal offence and the mother could be fined. Were they right in bringing in such a clause as that, which provided that if a child under seven years of age was left in a room containing an open firegrate not sufficiently protected against the child being burnt or scalded and without reasonable precautions against that risk being taken, and the child suffered serious injury or death, that should constitute a criminal offence for which the person in charge could be punished? Was it a fair thing to make such a matter as that a criminal offence? If the unfortunate child were injured the woman was to be fined the sum of £20 or go to jail if she could not pay. The same objection held good in regard to Section 14, which made it an offence where a woman overlay her child unintentionally. At the present if a woman overlay a child intentionally it came under the criminal law. Under this section it was an offence if a woman overlay a child under three years unintentionally, and in that case she was liable to a fine of £10, or, in case of drunkenness, £25. He wished to warn the House against the danger of multiplying these offences where there was no criminal intention. They ought not to make an offence a criminal act unless the person had a criminal intention. Could there be any possible defence for making a criminal of a woman who unintentionally overlay her child after coming home from work dead tired? What defence was there for fining a woman £10 under those circumstances? Was that showing any sympathy for the class of persons who would be dealt with by the Bill? He also wished to deal with one or two other sections. He had already said that they ought not to go beyond the limits of popular opinion upon questions of this kind. Other clauses of the Bill dealt with juvenile smokers, and that was a matter which ought not to be dealt with lightly. The House had been told of the frightful effects which smoking had upon boys under the age of sixteen. He admitted that, but did the Bill really deal effectively, in a nation which had not lost its sense of humour, with that offence? The Bill was somewhat badly drawn, because not only did it make an offence of smoking in the streets, but in the event of any boy or girl being found in possession of cigarettes or tobacco, whether for their own smoking or not—even if a girl was taking back for her father a packet of cigarettes—it would be the duty of the policeman to search, and it would be an offence under the section. He was aware that the case of a girl bringing home the cigarettes was not intended to be dealt with and might be altered in Committee, but it was to be made an offence for young boys under sixteen to smoke a cigarette in the street. In such cases it would be the duty of the police to bring those boys before the nearest magistrate. What was that tribunal to do? Let them take the case of a boy caught in the act of smoking. He was to be taken, he supposed, before the magistrate, who would be the child-magistrate, to deal with children's cases only. Of course he was aware that no hon. Member of the House of Commons ever smoked a cigarette before he was sixteen, but many of them had friends at school who did. If they were taken before the children's magistrate or the schoolmaster, what would be the right way to deal with an offence of that kind under the Bill? What had the magistrate power to do? Simply to reprimand the boy; that was all he could do. It struck him that some boys would not be terrified at a reprimand by a police magistrate. The boy, if he smoked another cigarette in the presence of the police, could be arrested, and for the second time brought before a magistrate, and he might be fined as much as 5s. He believed that boys under sixteen very often had not 5d. What were they going to do then? If the boy had a parent they might get it out of him.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: That would be very effective.

MR. RAWLINSON asked what they thought the parent would do with the boy. If they meant the parent to do anything, why had that not been provided for in the Bill? If there was no parent to pay the fine the boy could not be sent to prison. He was to be sent to an industrial school.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Nothing of the kind. He is to be sent to a place of detention.

MR. RAWLINSON said the boy was to be sent to a place where he would be kept at the expense of the State for a term to be fixed by the magistrate. Were these clauses likely to be effective in dealing with such a matter? Whether or not they approved of juvenile smoking, were they justified in interfering in that way? He hoped he had not dealt unsympathetically with the points to which he had called attention. Referring to the provisions of the Bill as to the children of vagrants, he asked whether it was absolutely right to take away a child from its mother who was not ill-treating it and in whose society the child was perfectly happy, though probably not properly educated. He thought the House should hesitate before granting such a power to any public authority, except in the case of girls who were living in brothels. He was glad the Bill contained a clause providing that when children were committed to the care of persons or institutions the religion of the parents was to be ascertained, so that the children should have the religious teaching of the denomination to which the parents belonged. Did it not occur to the Government that a similar clause might be applied in regard to the religious education of children who wer not separated from their parents and who were not sent to institutions in respect of misdemeanours? He had not criticised the clauses of which he approved, his only desire at present being to bring to light the clauses with which he disagreed.

*MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) said the Home Secretary and his very efficient Under-Secretary might on the whole be congratulated on the manner in which the Bill had been received. It was a large measure and it raised a good many questions, some of which needed careful examination. He did not understand the hon. and learned Member for Cambridge University to indicate disapproval of the principle of the Bill, though he disapproved of particular clauses. He had always understood that detailed criticism of the clauses of a Bill was reserved for the Committee Stage, and, therefore, he would not at present follow the line taken by the hon. and learned Gentleman. He accepted the statement that no Bill of this character should go far in advance of public opinion. They would make the law ridiculous if they attempted in such matters as this Bill dealt with to carry out something which the people at large would not unite in supporting. He rose to answer the question asked earlier in the evening by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the St. Augustine's division of Kent. On the First Reading of the Bill the Under-Secretary for the Home Department in his very luminous speech pointed out that there was one aspect of the matter on which there were two currents of philanthropic opinion running very strongly, namely, whether the Act of 1897 should or should not be extended to what were known as one-child homes. That matter was referred by the Government to a Select Committee, which was appointed on 11th February, and its Report had been laid on the Table of the House that day. It would be printed in a day or two and in the hands of Members of the House before the Bill was discussed in Committee. He hoped they would think that the Committee of which he was Chairman had performed their duties in a businesslike way. They heard a great deal of evidence from people who spoke, more or less, in a representative capacity. It was not much use getting mere individual opinions on a matter of that kind. They heard a great volume of unimpeachable evidence as to the gross carelessness, neglect, bad treatment, and even cruelty, in some cases very great cruelty, to children in one-child homes. In two or three cases the severest penalty of the law had been inflicted for murder of children in these homes. The witnesses, who included members of philanthropic societies and officials, gave evidence which had not been displaced in any way, and they all strongly recommended the inclusion of the one-child homes in the operation of the Bill. Then there followed a stream of evidence from witnesses, representing other philanthropic agencies, who thought that the inclusion of the one-child home would arouse great repugnance on the part of those who kept such homes, and that it would create difficulties in regard to the finding of such homes. The Committee listened with great attention to these witnesses, having regard to their services; but they did not feel that their evidence had displaced that of those who desired the inclusion of one-child homes. Therefore, the Committee came unanimously to the conclusion that the one-child home should be included in the Bill. He himself had entered into the investigations of the Committee with a perfectly open mind, and he had unhesitatingly arrived at the conclusion to which the Committee had unanimously come. But it was felt that some of the objections raised by some of the witnesses against this inclusion deserved serious consideration. The Committee also unanimously, therefore, came to the conclusion that it would be better under the Bill to give local authorities the power of exemption of inspection of homes, as to the *bona fides* and character of which they were absolutely satisfied. The home should be inspected in the first place, and if the local authority was satisfied it might be placed under a philanthropic body, and the power of exemption be exercised. He was very strongly of opinion—and he would be confirmed in that by his hon. colleague the Member for Christchurch (who had, after two years silence, made such an excellent contribution to their discussion that evening)—that inspection entirely depended upon the character of the person who made it. The Committee, therefore, inserted the suggestion in their Report that the inspector should be a woman whose heart was in the matter. They had more than one lady as a witness who had filled that office and they were very much impressed with the spirit in which they evidently conducted their work. The Committee further deprecated any sort of officialism which would interfere with any woman who entered upon the work of taking children into a home, not from motives of gain, but inspired by a feeling of affection for children at large, or some particular child. The Committee deprecated any officialism which would chill or in any way impair that sentiment. They also unanimously came to the agreement that the age-limit should be raised to seven years. The Lord-Advocate at the outset of his remarks indicated very clearly the underlying sentiment on which the Bill rested. It came from that rising spirit of humanitarianism which they saw and were thankful for in the present day and generation. They had discarded the old idea that the State should not do this, that, or the other thing. He had been very much touched by some of the Lord-Advocate's remarks in regard to the horrors of woman and child labour in the old days; and he was thankful to have lived to see the day when a Bill like this had been brought forward—a Bill saturated with the rising spirit of humanitarianism. He knew among those whom he represented and he thought in the country at large there was a great volume of current opinion in favour of it, and he hoped that it would become an Act of Parliament without delay, and with the consent of all parties in the House.

*MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said that the Bill on its first reading met with warm approval from all quarters, not least from the Irish Members; and so far as its general scope was concerned those warm feelings had not changed since in any way. There were, however, a few matters on which the Bill proposed changes in the existing law that were not altogether consistent with the experience of Irish Members. He referred specially to Part IV. which dealt with industrial and reformatory schools. Under the existing law destitute orphan children had been committed to industrial schools. but under Clause 56 that would in future be impossible. He had no knowledge of how far that might or might not be desirable in England, but it was quite certain that such a change would be bitterly resented in Ireland where there was a great deal of feeling in regard to industrial schools. They did not in Ireland regard industrial schools as of the nature of penal settlements, and in this respect there should be no change made in the existing law. Much as they desired to see the Bill go through, he hoped that the Government would be able to meet the wishes of the Irish Members in this respect or their attitude to the measure would become more hostile than at present. In Clause 118, which applied the Bill to Ireland, there were certain exclusions which did not seem to him justified. He could see no reason for making a difference between England and Ireland in the matter of the power of sending a child to an industrial school on the ground that it was uncontrollable. That power was dealt with in Sub-sections 3, 4 and 5 of Clause 56. He also seriously objected to the exclusion of Ireland from the provisions of Sections 73 to 79 which dealt with the establishment of day industrial schools. They had more than once impressed on the present and other Governments the desirability of establishing day industrial schools in Ireland, and there was no reason that he could see for excluding Ireland from the benefit of such institutions. If they were needed in England they were no less needed in Ireland—especially in the case of children of the very poor. He was sorry to say that there were a very large number of poor people in Dublin. One-third of the population lived in tenements and a larger proportion in one-roomed dwellings than in any city in the United Kingdom, except Glasgow. That being so, it would be evident that if day industrial schools were necessary in other parts of the United Kingdom they were not less likely to be necessary in Ireland. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill would be able to give the Irish Members a favourable reply on that matter. Other points in connection with the application of the Bill to Ireland would be dealt with in Committee, but he might say that he was not altogether happy as to Clause 13, which seemed to throw upon poor parents a very serious obligation. These things apart he welcomed the Bill very cordially; he was particularly glad to observe the clause which dealt with the detention of juvenile offenders, and he would like to see the Bill go further in that respect. He wished it was possible to provide not only for a separate room but for a separate building for the trial of juvenile offenders, but he knew that was a very difficult matter in many places. For the rest he thought they must all welcome the provisions of the Bill, and he thought there would be hardly any dissent to its proposals to bring the imprisonment of child offenders to an end. When the Under-Secretary introduced the Bill an hon. friend of his told him a very significant story. He said that during one of those periods of detention in one of His Majesty's gaols, which fell to the lot of Irish Members now and again, when this country had one of its recurring fits of repression, he heard a child crying continually in the prison. He made inquiries as to the cause, and he learned that it was a little lad, twelve years of age, who had been sent by the magistrates all the way from Galway to Mountjoy prison in Dublin for the heinous and horrible offence of stealing apples. He ventured to hope that by the action of the Government it would be made for ever impossible that anything so stupid and so cruel and utterly unjustifiable should henceforth take place.

*MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire) said he would like to associate himself at the outset with a very eloquent passage in the speech of the Lord-Advocate, in which he alluded to the genesis of this Bill being the livening and quickening sense of responsibility which had been gradually growing towards the potential citizens of this country. He would also like to congratulate his hon. friend the Under-Secretary on the reception of this most excellent Bill—the best Bill of the session. He hoped, therefore, his hon. friend would not think that if he criticised the Bill he would do anything to endanger its passage, as he would be the last person to do that. He was delighted with the fact that under Section 96 there would be no further imprisonment of children under fourteen, and he would ask his hon. friend to go a little further and extend that provision to those under sixteen. He also wished to ask his hon. friend to consider whether it was right that the managers of industrial schools should have the power of refusing children. That, to his mind, was a question of principle, and he was bound to say that, in his opinion, that was one of the few blots on the Bill. No such power ought to be given to the managers of industrial schools, which after all were paid for out of the rates and taxes. The managers had, therefore, no right to refuse children so long as their schools were not full, and if they were full some other provision should be made. He was glad that the responsibility was to be fixed upon the parent for begging children, but he would remind his hon. friend that vagrants were not particularly touched by the Bill, because they could get out of its provisions by saying that the managers of the industrial school refused to take the child. The Bill as it applied to vagrants was, he thought, particularly unfortunate. One of the most important, and to his mind almost the most important point, was that the local authority should be made to do its duty under compulsion to provide industrial schools. He would give the House one extract from the Report of the Prison Commissioners on that point. They said that of the total number of cases of juveniles in the country during the past year 61 per cent. were sentenced to seven days imprisonment or less. In the Report for 1907, the opinion was expressed that, in the case of the impressionable and imaginative young, a sentence—

> "Which only familiarises them with what ought to be a great mystery and dread of the interior of a prison, and which does not admit of sufficient time for the application of any useful reformatory influence must do more harm than good."

But magistrates had no choice but to send these juvenile offenders to prison, and it was most unfortunate that there should be no industrial schools to receive them. He was sorry that the age of supervision was not to be raised in the case of industrial schools from eighteen to twenty-one, and in the case of reformatories from ninteen to twenty-one. He hoped his hon. friend would listen to him in regard to that point in Committee. As to juvenile courts, he would like to know whether there would be a separate magistrate for London. The hon. Gentleman had said that there would be, but he could see no provision in the Bill to that effect. He thought that children should not be dealt with at different times on the same day, but on different days when there were no criminals about. He was delighted to think that these new detention homes were to be modelled on the plan which had already worked well in America, and he would like to know whether the provision with regard to them applied to London. A further question he would ask was why the duty of sending children to detention homes should be given to an officer of the police instead of to the education authority, and why the clause should not come into operation before 1910. He was bound to say that he considered that these detention homes ought not to be subject to the conditions that they were in the Bill, and that it should not be impracticable to take a child in if it was unruly. He did not think that that should be a ground for preventing a child going into a detention home. He hoped that, if not this year, some time they would abolish those forcing grounds of delinquency, the half-time system and street trading. There was no provision as to street trading, which did a great deal of harm. The Chief Constable of Manchester said—

> "Street trading, of all juvenile wage-earning occupations, is productive of a greater amount of evil morally and physically than any other occupation followed by children. Their earnings are spent very largely in dissipation by their dissolute parents, the boys developed into lazy, shiftless and worthless men, whilst the girls went down to the lowest depths of

shame. The downward path of these boys is quickly trodden. As soon as their business success wanes, they sink lower in the social scale, and adopt less honest means of livelihood, becoming for the most part racecourse touts, often travelling thieves and loafers, and as such spend their lives in common lodging-houses, and their money, when they get any, in drinking and gambling. They dislike more and more honest work; they become mere creatures of chance, and without ambition or care sink down until they end their days either in the gaol or the workhouse."

He would welcome a Bill which dealt with street trading. He trusted he had not laid himself open to misconstruction by these criticisms. The late Home Secretary had rather pooh-poohed portions of the Bill as being grandmotherly legislation, and perhaps he was tainted with a desire for that kind of law, but it was preferable to that obtained by talking of the lone lorn widow who was to be prevented from earning her livelihood if the State stepped in. He welcomed the Bill because it translated into legislative action the hopes and ideals which ardent social reformers had held any time during the last ten or twelve years more than any other Bill which they had had before the House. As such he welcomed it with satisfaction, and wished it Godspeed.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I must thank hon. Members who have spoken for the generally favourable reception which they have accorded to this Bill. I think the House as a whole welcomes the opportunity of giving better protection and guidance to those large sections of the child population of the country who stand so much in need of it. I must specially express my gratitude to the late Home Secretary, speaking for the Opposition, for the general approval he gave to this measure. As I said on the First Reading of the Bill, the Government in introducing a long and complicated measure of this kind in a session crowded with controversial measures are largely dependent upon the goodwill of hon. Members opposite to pass it into law, and that goodwill I am happy to think the Opposition are giving in full measure. That general measure of agreement between the two sides of the House has only been arrived at by our rigid exclusion of any subject, no matter how much we may have been tempted to include it, on which there is any considerable division of opinion in this House. Some Members would have greatly desired to have dealt with the question of children in public-houses, certainly it might have been desirable in this Bill to deal with the question of street trading to which the hon. Member who has just spoken has referred, but the late Home Secretary very distinctly said in his speech this afternoon that either of those subjects would have introduced a controversial element. And with regard to street trading I would point out that after all there are powers under the existing law to deal with the evils which arise, the Employment of Children Act having been placed upon the Statute-book only five years ago. The great majority of the large towns have made bye-laws to suppress the worst evils of street trading, and it is rather early to say that it is urgently necessary to amend the law in that particular. Although the Bill is a large one, and although we have necessarily excluded many matters which some hon. Members desire to see dealt with, there is one that has not been referred to this afternoon, and which does not find a place in the Bill, which we desire to add in the Committee stage. My right hon. friend the Home Secretary has been greatly impressed by the terrible catastrophes that occur from time to time through fires in theatres and elsewhere where entertainments are given for the benefit of children. The recent catastrophe at Barnsley, where a large number of little ones met their death, and others both in this country and abroad, have brought home to his mind the necessity for the provision of some greater security for the safety of children attending in large numbers entertainments of this character. In the Committee I shall therefore move the following clause:

"Where an entertainment for children, or any entertainment at which the majority of the persons attending are children, is provided, and the number of children who attend the entertainment exceeds 100, and access to any part of the building in which children are accommodated is by stairs, it shall be the duty of the person who provides the entertainment to station and keep stationed on the stairs a sufficient number of adult attendants, properly instructed as to their duties, to prevent more children or other persons being admitted to any such part of the building than that part can properly accommodate and to control the movement of the children and other persons admitted to any such part whilst entering and leaving, and to take all other reasonable precautions for the safety of the children."

Then there follow certain machinery provisions for securing the enforcement of that clause and making it clear as to what kind of entertainment it applies to. I would add that this clause does not apply to any entertainments given in any private dwelling house. The enactment of this clause will, we hope, go very far to prevent the possibility of the recurrence of those terrible catastrophes which have more than once shocked the feelings of the whole nation. To-day a very large variety of suggestions have been made for the amendment of this Bill, but most of them have regard to points of detail and can be dealt with in Committee. I can assure the House that in Committee the Government will most cordially welcome any suggestions made for the improvement of the Bill. I will only deal to-day with a few of the more important suggestions touching the larger questions of principle. With regard to the first portion of the Bill dealing with infant life protection, I think the House owes a debt of gratitude to my right hon. friend the Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Notts and his colleagues on the Select Committee, for the expedition and the care with which they have considered the question submitted to them by the House. That Committee was thoroughly impartial. I took particular care before they were appointed to see that no member nominated had pre-conceived opinions upon the question, and they have come to the unanimous conclusion that those persons who undertake the care of one child, whether for a lump sum or a recurring payment shall be brought under the Act. That is the conclusion which my own investigations lead me heartily to endorse, and it will be a matter of great satisfaction to me to propose in Committee machinery for carrying into effect the recommendation of the Select Committee. Certain of the clauses of the second part of the Bill have been somewhat severely criticised by one or two hon. Members, but I should be sorry indeed to give up any of those clauses which relate to the provision of fire-guards and the death of children through overlying. I would point out that during last year a private Member's Bill was introduced into this House, and although it did not receive a Second Reading it obtained a large measure of support from both sides of the House. That Bill dealt with the deaths of children from fire and overlying. It was the result of deliberations conducted not by fanatical enthusiasts, but by responsible authorities who had a first claim to speak on the subject—the Coroners' Society, the British Medical Society, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, all collaborated to secure the drafting and the introduction of that Bill, and the opinion of those societies is, I submit, entitled to great weight in this House. The hon. Member for the Cambridge University said it was a wrong thing to do to make it an offence if a child was burned to death, if that child was left alone in a room with an unprotected fire, while we did not make it an offence to leave the fire unprotected. I think in our law there are many cases where a disaster occurring makes that an offence which is not an offence in itself if no disaster occurs. And the late Secretary of State has pointed out that it is impracticable to make a law that parents shall guard their fires when their children are left alone in a room, because you cannot enforce such legislation. You can only enforce this law when the injury discloses the circumstance. You cannot establish an inspectorate to go into private houses and see that the fires are guarded, but at the same time I think the facts that there are 1,600 deaths every year, and serious injuries to many more children from this cause, compel this House to take action, and the only possible form of action is that proposed by this Bill. With regard to overlying, the right hon. Gentleman opposite said the real cause of death of infants under these circumstances is to be found in the overcrowding of the poorer districts. That is undoubtedly true. Where people are not overcrowded, children are not overlaid, but is it to be contended for a moment that this holocaust of infant life is to go on till we solve the housing problem? Although we take action year by year to remedy the evil of overcrowding, and although the Government propose before long to introduce further legislation to advance that object, I think the House would be building on a slender foundation indeed if they said the housing problem would be solved at so early a date that it was not necessary to take direct action to prevent overlying. I think public opinion welcomes these clauses which deal with the death of children from fire and from overlying. Some Members have suggestions to make with regard to the penalties imposed in these cases. That is a matter for the Committee, but the purpose of the clauses I trust will commend itself to the House. I now turn to the third part of the Bill which deals with the question of juvenile smoking. Some hon. Members have commented upon what they consider the impracticable nature of some of the provisions proposed, but I would point out that this question has been examined by three separate Committees or Commissions—the Committee on Physical Deterioration, the Royal Commission on Physical Training, and a Committee of the House of Lords specially appointed to consider this particular subject—and all three came to the unanimous conclusion that this evil of juvenile smoking was not to be put aside as something unimportant, but that it was a real cause of physical deterioration in the child life of the country. I would ask the House to read the Report of the Committee of the House of Lords and the evidence before it, and if they do, I think they will find abundant proof in the evidence of medical authorities, and of social workers among the poorer classes, that this is a rapidly growing evil for which a remedy should be found. This House ought not to put aside as of no account the deliberate and unanimous verdict of three separate inquiries. With regard to the powers of the police to confiscate tobacco in the hands of children found smoking, I would like to point out that if that power was not given to them there is no power to prevent the smoking in the streets which is so rife among the little boys of the country, other than charging them before the Courts. What is the alternative: are all these children to be brought before the Police Courts? Reformed as those Courts will be by this Bill, it is most desirable to prevent these children being brought into them and charged with this trivial offence. It is considered more desirable that the little boy's tobacco should be confiscated rather than he should be made a defendant in a legal process, and this is the action recommended by the Committee of the House of Lords. I agree that no methods of legal repression in matters of this kind can be completely effective. I agree that if this Bill is placed on the Statute Book in the form in which it now is, we should find that juvenile smoking would not be completely and finally suppressed. But although the discipline of the State can never be so effective as that of the home, the State must step in where the discipline of the home is absent, and I believe that these clauses will go far to suppress juvenile smoking directly. Indirectly, it will go still further, because once the law becomes known throughout the nation; once it becomes known that after considering this matter Parliament has enacted this law, public opinion will become increasingly active and eager to suppress the practice which has been condemned. In regard to the part of the Bill relating to reformatory and industrial schools, I will deal first with what has been said by the hon. Member opposite speaking for the Irish Members. On the two chief questions to which he has referred, I think I shall be able fully to meet his wishes. In Ireland there are orphans who come under the provisions relating to industrial schools merely because they are orphans and destitute; and I cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that, as a matter of principle, they are far better dealt with by the Poor Law than by the industrial school system. Although a similar provision exists in the English law which enables orphans to be sent to the industrial schools, yet, last year, throughout the whole of the country, only six children were sent, and the year before only three children were sent. I think that it would be undesirable to use the industrial school system for Poor Law cases. But in Ireland the public hold the opposite view. The circumstances there are very different, and a very much larger number of children are sent to the Irish schools as being orphans and destitute, than are sent in this country. Over 200 were sent in Ireland as compared with a mere handful in England. That being the case, and as it is understood that no change in the law should be made by this Bill which is strongly objected to by any large body of the community, the Government will be willing to propose in Committee an Amendment to the Irish Clause, making it clear that the law in that particular shall be left in the state in which it now is. With regard to the second proposal of the hon. Member that the existing law should be extended by applying to Ireland the provisions of the law of England in regard to day industrial schools, that, I think, is a very reasonable demand. The day industrial schools in England perform a most necessary function. They do not exist at all in Ireland. There is no provision on the Statute Book enabling them to be established, and the Government will gladly seize the opportunity afforded by the introduction of this Bill to extend the English day industrial school clauses, perhaps with some modifications which may be necessitated by the different conditions of Ireland, to that country. As to the smaller points of detail to which my hon. friend referred, I will ask him to allow me to reserve them for further consideration. The hon. and learned Member for North-West Durham urged that Clause 56 of the Bill needs strengthening and extension in certain directions. He made the statement that there are 30,000 children who ought now to be committed to the industrial schools who are left neglected and unhelped. That is an estimate I cannot accept; I think that the number is by no means so large as that, and that the estimate rests on a very unsatisfactory basis. I gather it has been arrived at by generalising from the circumstances at Liverpool. They have estimated that the proportion of children committed in Liverpool ought to be committed in every little town and every village over the whole of Great Britain. That is obviously a fallacious deduction. Although it is no doubt the case that there are children who ought to be committed who have not been committed, yet the number is very greatly short of that suggested by the hon. and learned Member. The hon. and learned Member has proposed that the present Act, which is now in large degree permissive, should be made mandatory in certain respects. Under the existing law any person may bring before a Court of summary jurisdiction a child who falls within the categories which would enable it to be sent to an industrial school. But it is said that what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and, while every person might act, as a matter of fact no person does act, and children are left in their evil surroundings to grow up neglected, serving an apprenticeship, perhaps, to crime, and forming a class of child population which urgently needs the care of the State. I think that there is much to be said for strengthening the law in that particular, and I might go so far as to say that in my opinion it is desirable that it should be clearly stated in the Bill that where the education authority does not take action under its powers then it shall be the duty of the police to see that these children are not left in a state of neglect, but that they should be brought before the magistrates with a view to their committal, in proper cases, to industrial schools. I shall propose an Amendment in Committee to effect that purpose. Then, secondly it is suggested that it should be made compulsory on local authorities to provide the necessary industrial school accommodation for children who are committed. At the present time, so far from the schools being over full, there is a very large number of vacancies; they have difficulty in filling their beds; within the last two or three years several schools have been closed because they have not been able to obtain enough children. It may be the case that some local authorities are unwilling to make the necessary payments to secure that the children sent from their districts shall be sent to the industrial schools. I think in England there are cases, though very few, I am informed, where there is difficulty in inducing the local authorities to contribute to the maintenance of the children sent from their districts to the industrial schools. But I am afraid that in Scotland, in some localities, the situation is not quite so satisfactory. If there is general agreement on both sides of the House that it should be mandatory on the local authorities to provide industrial school accommodation for children just as it is mandatory on them to provide elementary school accommodation for the children of their districts, I for one should welcome such an Amendment to the Bill; but if it is found that such a proposal would arouse so much opposition from the local authorities concerned as to imperil the passage of the Bill, then the matter would wear another aspect. Perhaps before the House goes into Committee we may have a further expression of opinion on the subject, but so far as I am concerned I should be glad indeed if it were found possible to make it compulsory on the local authorities to contribute to the maintenance of the children sent from their districts to the industrial schools. It is important that these children should be sent to these industrial schools, which are institutions of the greatest possible value to the community. They stop at their source the streams which feed the reservoirs of crime, and the nation ought to be exceedingly grateful to those local authorities and to those private individuals who with great self-sacrifice and great labour have maintained the industrial schools of the Kingdom. I turn now to the fifth part of the Bill, which deals with the treatment of juvenile offenders. We have been asked by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and also by my hon. friend the Member for Berwick, what will be the provision made by the Home Office for establishing the system of juvenile Courts in London. My hon. friend the Member for Berwick says there is no provision in the Bill for the appointment of a special magistrate for the purpose. There is no provision in the Bill, because such provision is unnecessary. Under the existing law a certain number of magistrates may be appointed by the Home Secretary for London, and that number is not at present complete, and we can add a special children's magistrate without any further statutory authority. I will explain very briefly what will probably be the method of administering the juvenile Courts in London. It is impossible to bring all the children, witnesses, parents, probation officers and other persons concerned into one central Court; and, on the other hand, it is impossible to have a number of different Courts in various parts of London, each of them sitting every day. I find that on the average there are ten fresh cases of juvenile offenders tried in the Police Courts of London every day, excluding Greenwich and Woolwich. If you include hearings on remand, there are only sixteen hearings per day of children's cases in all the Police Courts of London, excluding Greenwich and Woolwich. It is obvious you cannot split up sixteen cases over a number of Courts, and therefore it will probably be found—I do not pledge myself to the details of the scheme—that the best course will be to establish four places of detention in different parts of London, each of which will be used for children on arrest and remand, for children committed for trial, and under a proper system of classification, for children committed to places of detention instead of to prison. There are now three Remand Homes. I hope it will be practicable in these places to provide rooms, without any additional cost or very small additional cost, which can be used as Court-houses. The children's magistrate could visit in turn these four places of detention and could make the circuit in two days, visiting the first in the morning and the second in the afternoon of the first day, and the third in the morning and the fourth in the afternoon of the second day. The result would be that a certain number of children would be kept overnight sometimes, when they could not be released on bail; but all those that I have consulted—and I have consulted several persons keenly interested in this matter who are fully entitled to speak with authority—are agreed it is better to keep, if necessary, a small number of children in detention for one night than to forego the great benefit of having a special magistrate to deal with these cases. If the House approves, that probably will be the plan which my right hon. friend will adopt. The late Home Secretary said he was somewhat doubtful whether it was practicable to abolish the imprisonment of children altogether, and that there might be some cases in which it would be essential to retain that power. We have tried to think of such cases but cannot think of any which could not be dealt with by sending the children to a reformatory, or in the course of very young children, to an industrial school, and since we retain the power to commit the children to these reformatory and industrial schools I am inclined to adhere to the view that it is unnecessary in any case to subject the children to the rigours of imprisonment, and to familiarise them with the penalties, in the ordinary gaols. I come lastly to the sixth part of the Bill. The only clause in that which has been criticised is the clause dealing with vagrant children. I can assure the hon. Member for Christchurch, whose maiden speech we all listened to with pleasure and interest, that this clause includes the caravan children, whom he has in mind. But I would point out further that the object of that clause is not to sweep the whole body of children, who are now wandering the roads of the country with showmen, or tinkers, or vagrants, into industrial schools. As the Lord Advocate said, in some cases it may be necessary that they should be sent to these institutions, but I agree with the hon. and learned Member for the University of Cambridge that we should not lightly contemplate the necessity of separating the parent from the child. It should only be in the last resort that they should be separated and the child taken to one of these institutions. The purpose of this clause is to penalise the parent who takes a child about the roads of the country and thereby deprives it of efficient elementary education, and the effect of that clause will be not so much to send all these children to industrial schools as to keep them off the roads altogether. A large proportion of these people have permanent homes to which they go in the winter-months, and once they know that they will be harassed by the law if they take their children with them and deprive them of education, I think in almost all cases they will do what very large numbers of them do already, that is, arrange for the children to be kept in some specified place. I must once more thank the House for the generally favourable reception which it has given to this Bill. This Parliament already has achieved much useful social legislation of a non-controversial kind and I hope it will achieve much more. Perhaps we may venture to think that when this Parliament comes to an end and a successor comes to sit in these seats we may be able to feel that not the least satisfactory among its achievements has been the enactment of the measure which we now ask the House to read a second time.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Guinness*,)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (FOREIGN PRESS).

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) in moving—" That this House is of opinion that accommodation should be provided in the House of Commons for representatives of the foreign and colonial Press, and that such extension of the Reporters' Gallery or such increase of room elsewhere should be made as will suffice for this purpose," said that his Motion was a novel one, and he understood that the question of the admission of the foreign and colonial Press to the House of Commons had never been made the subject of a formal Motion before. He had been informed that there were some difficulties in the way because the authority of Mr. Speaker was limited and so was the authority of the First Commissioner of Works, and the Government had never vested in any Committee the plenary powers contemplated in this Motion. Therefore, he was compelled to appeal to the only remaining authority, and that was the House of Commons itself. Some of his hon. friends had twitted him with having wasted the opportunity afforded him in the ballot by submitting a Motion upon a subject which they considered was of comparatively trivial importance, and they had advised him to withdraw the Motion and submit another dealing with a more pressing matter. From that view he entirely dissented, because he thought the question he was raising was one of very great importance indeed. If his Motion were carried it would be at least a step towards the great goal at which they were all aiming, namely, international peace and amity. The representatives of the Foreign Press Association in London—an influential body of gentlemen presided over by the veteran correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, and a loyal well-wisher of this country—had pressed upon him this consideration that undoubtedly the free entry of the representatives of the foreign Press into the House of Commons would tend to allay international friction and misunderstanding and secure international goodwill. They had all anxiously watched the deliberations of the Hague Conference in the hope that they would result in a substantial advance towards that end, but the results were not such as to satisfy the earnest advocates of peace, and it struck him that a concession of the kind contemplated in this Motion would, at least in a quiet way, supplement the efforts of our representative at the Conference by winning the foreign Press to a fair and kindly attitude towards us in regard to our foreign relations. It was surely a truism that the foreign and our own Press were very potent instruments for good or for ill, for peace or for war, and there were on record many notable instances of the influence of both the British and foreign Press in inflaming national jealousies where none need have existed, and which were only the outcome of misunderstandings. Surely it went without saying that, isolated as we were in many ways, with vital interests in every quarter of the globe—interests which might—indeed, sometimes must—be in conflict with those of other countries—surely it was to-day the least good policy—to put it on no higher ground—to win the Foreign Press to a fair-minded, just attitude towards our country. He wished to point out to those hon. Members who thought this subject was not of great importance, that it might have a direct result in the direction of a limitation of armaments, and surely that was an ideal which they all were desirous of attaining. He would quote to the House a resolution passed by the great International Congress of the Press upon this subject—

> "(1) The Congress considers that the representatives of foreign newspapers in any country should, in order to effectually carry out their professional duties, enjoy the same privileges and facilities as are accorded to the Press representatives of that particular country abroad."

In the published report of the Congress proceedings, the following passage occurred—

> "In the debate on these resolutions it was stated that while in almost every Parliamentary country the foreign correspondents have free access to the reporters' gallery in the Chamber as well as in the Senate, such facilities are denied to foreign correspondents in London, who are not admitted to the reporters' gallery of either House. The resolutions were warmly supported by the English and American delegates and carried unanimously."

What were the facts? In every Parliament in Europe British representatives had not only free access to the lobby and gallery, but had, as a rule, the best seats. Surely we should reciprocate this kindly consideration as a simple act of international courtesy. In the Russian Duma—the youngest Parliament in the world and for whose vigorous growth they all fervently hoped—at the instigation of the British Press representatives, a large proportion of seats were granted to them, as well as other facilities of a very liberal kind. He need hardly say how both in domestic and foreign affairs courtesy was a great instrument for peace. They knew this from experience in their own country in the House of Commons and in their domestic affairs, and when there was a conflict of interests and disagreeable things had to be said and done, courtesy often smoothed the way and somehow got over the difficulty. Consideration given to the Press was regarded as given to the people. Why should this country refuse to reciprocate the kindly consideration so freely bestowed upon them by their foreign neighbours? Why should this country act the dog-in-the-manger, and, because our Parliament existed before there was any Press, why should they not in this matter adapt themselves to the times? Other Parliaments had made structural alterations to meet the needs of Press representatives, and he did not see why some accommodation should not be provided for those who had treated British representatives so kindly abroad. Moreover, it was most important for the peace of the world and our relations with foreign countries that the representatives of the foreign Press should have direct, first hand knowledge of the expression of the opinions of the British people as voiced in Parliament. The representatives of the foreign Press at present were obliged to depend upon the statements and reports in the British Press, which were not infrequently of an exceedingly partisan colour and conveyed to foreign countries misleading opinions as to what was actually the real voice of Parliament. This was a danger which in the past had brought about some unfortunate results. He would give two recent instances. The House would remember that a leading journal recently made some extraordinary and unguarded statements with regard to our relations with a certain great Power—statements which, after a short day of reflection, the country universally repudiated. He had no doubt that the authors of those statements were actuated by the highest patriotic motives, but the statements turned out to be utterly and entirely false. They were for a short time believed, however, and the state of tension created was during that time exceedingly grave and might have become positively dangerous. In another case a review for which he had the highest respect had for months past—he was not sure that it had not been for years past—been belabouring a friendly Power, insinuating that it had the most sinister designs against us and stirring up strife and bad blood. That review was apt to be taken as embodying the opinion of a large section of people in this country. Hon. Members knew that that was not so, but that opinion had permeated the body politic in the country to which he referred. The corrective of that state of things was to permit the representatives of the foreign Press to hear the debates, the Questions and Answers, and to see the people who voiced the views of the people of this country. He would read an extract from a letter written by the President of the Foreign Press Association in London, which would show the House what was the feeling among the representatives of the foreign Press. He said—

> "No country has now a greater interest to have the debates of her Parliament truly reported in foreign papers than Great Britain. Nowhere is the political life of the country so well mirrored in her Parliament as here, and nowhere are its debates so thorough, earnest, and dignified. Their truthful and adequate reports in foreign journals would be at once the best propaganda in favour of this country, and would have an educational influence greatly profitable to civilisation and international harmony. Some special reasons are furnished by the international situation of to-day. Great Britain has definitively left her former 'splendid isolation' and concluded with several other nations treaties and conventions for the maintenance of peace. Both those who are already thus linked to her, as well as those who are not, certainly look for the explanation of her policy to the British Parliament, and seek their cue in its debates. A wrong or inaccurate report of them tells at once on public opinion of the country concerned, and on its attitude towards Great Britain. There could be quoted many instances of late international misunderstandings chiefly, if not exclusively, arising from the way in which Parliamentary debates had been reported. But the excuse of these papers which sinned most has always been that they had reports only of second hand, their own representatives not being admitted."

The Foreign Press Association in London on one occasion did great service to this country, and he would quote some words which were worthy of the consideration of the House. In the winter of 1899 at the outset of the South African War, the polemics between the English and the Continental Press had assumed an acuteness considered at that time most dangerous to the peace of Europe. Violent and indiscriminate accusations were levelled at one another from both sides, and in this conflict nobody, not even the most illustrious and august personages, were spared. A conference of British and foreign journalists was held in December, 1899, and a resolution was carried unanimously, declaring as offences against the honour and dignity of the Press—

> "(1) All libellous attacks against persons who are outside politics, and who, from their position, are precluded from replying. (2) All libellous attacks against nations and against the Press of different countries."

The action of the conference proved of incalculable value in restraining the violent spirit of the Press which desired to show hostility to this country, and helped to relieve a tension which was becoming intolerable. What was wanted was recognition in that House of the fair claim of the foreign and Colonial Press to admission. He and his friends had no desire to force the hand of the responsible Minister, but he suggested that steps should be taken to give effect to this Resolution when time and opportunity offered. He begged to move.

Mr. MADDISON (Burnley), in seconding the Motion, said the mover had given good reasons why it should be accepted. He was quite sure that the fact that the foreign and Colonial Press were not admitted was not due to any antipathy towards them. He thought that should be made plain at once. They were not trying to convert the House to a more friendly feeling to the Press of foreign nations. As the mover of the Resolution had said, there were solid historical reasons why they had been slow to move in the desired direction. The British Parliament existed before there was any Press at all, and they knew well that the reporting of speeches was looked upon with a jealous eye, and for a long time was prohibited altogether. Their treatment of the foreign Press might be taken as evidence of the great antiquity of the House. Had not the time now come when they should discontinue that policy? This was the day of internationalism in art and science, in labour and capital, and in almost every form of human activity. There was a tendency nowadays to get the opinion of others as well as our own, and he thought that was a very healthy movement. The time had gone by when the average man entertained the savage opinion that in order to love his own country he must hit all other countries. He and his friends claimed that the admission of the representatives of the foreign Press would be a modest contribution to international fraternity. It might be said that the reports which appeared could be copied or translated. He thought hon. Members would agree with him when he said that no man could really understand the composition and methods of that House unless he was present to hear the speeches and witness how the speeches were received. The skilled journalist — and it would be only the skilled journalist who would come—could interpret the feeling of the House in a way that no mere report of a speech could convey. He hoped hon. Members would not belittle this contribution to international fraternity. We had need in these days of every factor which made for good will, and we could not afford to be isolated from the great currents of humanity along which progress ultimately was to be found. He could conceive of no objection, except on the ground of lack of space, to providing accommodation for the foreign and Colonial Press. It might be said that if they could not find room for all the representatives of the provincial Press, why should they try to make room for the foreign and Colonial Press? He thought that that was a very insular idea. As had been said by the mover of the Resolution, British journalists obtained not only ample but some of the best accommodation in all the great Parliaments of Europe. The representatives of the British Press had the run of the lobbies, and were able to speak to Ministers and Members, and by so doing they received explanations which they would not otherwise obtain to save this country and others from disaster. Therefore, he maintained that it was not valid to argue that because they could not accommodate all our own Press they should not find room for the foreign and Colonial Press. Fortunately, the Minister on the front bench who was charged with the duty of supervising the arrangements of the House was one who had got nearest to the performance of the miraculous, and, therefore, hon. Members looked to him with a good deal of confidence in this matter. He would not venture to make even a suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman, but he had thought that the requisite space for the accommodation of the foreign journalists, and with which he understood they would be satisfied, who would be selected by the Syndicate of the International Press, might be found with comparative ease in the galleries on each side of the House which were very seldom occupied by hon. Members. In conclusion, he could not think that the British Parliament wished to remain the one great Assembly in Europe which kept out of its Chamber the representatives of the foreign Press, and he was quite sure that they might rely upon the First Commissioner of Works to find a solution of the accommodation difficulty.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that accommodation should be provided in the House of Commons for representatives of the foreign and Colonial Press, and that such extension of the Reporters' Gallery or such increase of room elsewhere should be made as will suffice for this purpose."—*Mr. Smeaton.*)

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): The Resolution which has been so ably and so reasonably presented to the House by my two hon. friends is not one which necessarily or directly involves the Government in any action, though it is quite true that if carried it might impose upon me the necessity of considering some structural alterations hereafter. But though the Government is not involved, I think it is only courteous to the House that I should intervene as soon as possible, not to venture to advise hon. Members, but to lay before them such facts as are within my own knowledge, because I have been compelled to study the question both from its architectural and structural points of view. The allocation of the seats in the Press Gallery rests entirely with the authorities of the House, not with me or the Government. If this Resolution were carried to-night they might order it to be carried into effect, and I would obey that order subject, of course, to the control of the Treasury, which, I am sure to our ultimate advantage, has a finger in every pie. I could have wished that this Resolution should have been moved in Committee of the House, because Mr. Speaker might there have followed precedents set by his predecessors, and have addressed the House himself from that side gallery which this Motion would apparently and necessarily entrench upon. Such a precedent was set by Speaker Addington when he spoke from the side gall ry on a question of assessed taxes. But this illumination of the debate is out of the question and I do not assume to represent the opinion of Mr. Speaker or of the authorities of the House in this matter. I merely state what is within my own knowledge, that unfortunately the accommodation for the British Press is wholly insufficient as it is at present. I believe I shall be very much understating the case when I say that there are more than fifty newspapers anxious and waiting for accommodation in the Press Gallery which they are now quite unable to obtain. During the last year I have been able to improve the accommodation for the Press, not in the Gallery itself, but behind the Gallery, and have, at all events, provided a place of retreat in which descriptions of Parliamentary proceedings may be written free from the bustle and disturbance of actual debate, and with some degree of comfort. But I do think that on this question charity in seats must begin with the home Press. No one would more warmly welcome than I should the presence of the representatives of the foreign Press in our Gallery. I think it would be an enormous advantage that they should acquire intimate knowledge of our Parliamentary habits, and that they should be able to transmit to their readers abroad some vivid pictures of our attitude of mind towards foreign nations, and that they should be permitted to mirror, as our own Press does, the natural desire we have of strengthening the bonds of friendly relations, and our constant desire to destroy those causes which most unnecessarily, as they generally seem to me, lead to those irritations which occasionally occur between ourselves and other nations. I should have been glad if we could have reciprocated some of that consideration shown to, and that accommodation placed at the disposal of, our Press in other countries. But I do not see that it is possible under present conditions, because in order to do so I should have to deprive hon. Members of part, probably a considerable part, of their accommodation in the side galleries.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): What about the empty Peers' Gallery?

*MR. HARCOURT: I have observed the Amendment of my hon. friend on the Paper; but even if I were to take part of these side galleries there are structural difficulties in the removal of the door. Hon. Members may not know that the whole of the wall there is a mass of flues for the ventilation of the House and the removal of the smoke. These are, however, only some of the difficulties. If the representatives of the foreign Press were put in the side galleries they would probably be there only when the House was occupied with subjects of high importance and great public interest, and these are the occasions when the galleries are most required by Members of the House themselves. It must not be forgotten that these galleries are an integral part of the House, and that from thence hon. Members can ask questions and make speeches.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Would they catch the Speaker's eye there?

*MR. HARCOURT: If Mr. Speaker's eye is fixed on things above, no doubt hon. Members would be able to catch it. From inquiries I have made, I have come to the conclusion that, generous as are their sentiments towards the Press of all nations, even to the Press of their own hon. Members are not prepared at present to part with the limited seating accommodation they have in this Chamber. I have had before now to resist proposals which I venture to call proposals of the "hardy septennial species," to provide a new Chamber. The demand is made at the beginning of every new Parliament that we should set to work to construct a new Chamber; but in the second session it becomes less urgent; and, as a rule, it wholly disappears in the third. I know all the plans which have been made for the enlargement and for the alteration of the shape of this Chamber, and the advantages of the horse-shoe form which would enable Members to drift from one side of the House to the other more easily. I know how the Chamber may be made to accommodate double the number of Members who represent constituencies. I do not deny that it can be done at great expense, and at considerable inconvenience, but when completed you would have acquired a Chamber which would be quite intolerable for the transaction of ordinary business, such as we are to-night engaged upon. I would not venture to count the Members present, but at all events for the transaction of the ordinary House of Commons business, I believe that the present Chamber is well suited to its purpose. Even with a larger Chamber no one can say what the acoustic properties would be. By accident, and after many alterations, the acoustic properties of the present Chamber leave little to be desired, and could not have been got by design. I cannot discover a solvent by which its Gothic stones could be made of a more elastic material so as to provide the accommodation desired by private Members with imagination. After all, I am tied by the inexorable limits of Sir Francis Barry's original design. Unfortunately the House was built in the days when Parliamentary reporting was in its childhood, in the days when any private Member could espy reporters and have them excluded as strangers—as I have myself seen done. There was no room then in this building for the comity of nations being recognised by the presence of representatives of the foreign Press. There is an Amendment on the Paper in the name of my hon. and learned friend, the Member for Donegal. I do not propose to deal with it now; in fact if I did so, I would be out of order. I will only in passing say that it is dangerous to introduce foreign matter into the wheels of a delicate machine; it is likely to lead to friction, and possibly heat, and in the relations between this floor and that Gallery there is enough of that commodity to-day. At all events, I cannot regard the hon. Member's prescription in the nature either of a prophylactic or an antiseptic. While I deeply sympathise with the objects of the hon. Members who have moved and seconded this Resolution to-night, I feel bound honestly to tell the House that I do not see at present the methods by which they can be carried out, but if circumstances were to alter, and I can see some machinery by which we can create accommodation for our foreign friends I shall be the first, not only to carry it out, but to suggest it to the House myself. Under these circumstances I hope the hon. Gentleman will think it possible to withdraw his Motion, because if he presses it to a division I shall feel bound to vote against it and advise my friends to do so, but I am sure that by the discussion of his Motion he has enabled us to give a warm expression of our sympathy with those representatives of the foreign Press whom we should like to see here, and I am sure the rejection of the Motion would give an impression abroad to those friends for whom we entertain warm feelings of friendship which is wholly foreign to the tone and temper of this House.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said he joined with his right hon. friend in asking his friend who moved this Resolution not to go to a division. He did not know what the result might be, but if they were to divide he agreed with his right hon. friend that it would be giving an entirely false impression. He was not surprised at the speech of the First Commissioner of Works; he never was surprised at the speech of an official. He started upon any political enterprise upon which he might be tempted to enter with strong conviction that anything a private Member proposed was sure at first to meet with every obstacle from the official hierarchy. That was sure to be the case, however democratic and genial the Minister might be, and they could not have one more democratic and genial than they had in this case. It was part of the obstinacy and unwillingness to accept any proposal which had been in the race of rulers since the days of the Old Testament. His right hon. friend had made exactly the same speech in substance that had been made with less grace by every man in his place to any proposal to increase the accommodation for the Press in the House. As a matter of fact, as the right hon. Gentleman said, the admission of the Press was an innovation in this House, but his universally informed friend, or his encyclopædic friend on his left told him that the Press Gallery dated from 1835. He knew, however, that his friend Mr. Justin McCarthy, when he reported for a Liverpool paper, was only able to report a speech of Mr. Gladstone from a spot behind the Strangers' Gallery. He and some other reporters got that privilege, and he believed the only reason they obtained it was that Mr. Cardwell happened to be a Cabinet Minister and sat for a Liverpool constituency. There was a time not long since when no representatives of the provincial Press were admitted, and the First Commissioner of Works got up from time to time and made the same explanation that it would require structural alterations to admit them, and that there were pipes and flues to be considered. If a Minister could not give any other explanation he fell back upon pipes and flues. But they all knew that if his right hon. friend made up his mind that it was possible to make this change it could be done, and in his opinion a decent journeyman carpenter could make all the changes necessary and take half-a-dozen seats from the side galleries. Pipes and flues were the embroidery by which bureaucracy was enabled—if he might mix the metaphor—to eke out the nakedness of its argument. It was quite true that the home Press was not sufficiently accommodated already, and his hon. friend reminded him that the *Hansard* arrangements were also inconvenient. He sometimes thought it was more important that they should have the Press there than the Members of the House. He knew he never found the House of Commons half so interesting as when he was about fifty or a hundred miles away from it, because on taking up the reporting columns or the still more interesting descriptive reports of the papers he found thrills and excitement and representations of a tumultuous House of Commons, whereas when he was present it was often the case that one Gentleman was addressing his constituents with three or four other Gentlemen in the House, who were not listening to him, but waiting for him to sit down in order that they might speak. What did it matter if 12 or 13 feet were taken off the side gallery? He had never seen that gallery filled except when Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill, and so exceptional was that occasion that even the floor of the House was occupied by chairs for hon. Members who could not otherwise get a seat, and some of them were there as early as the midnight before the right hon. Gentleman proposed his Bill. Except on an occasion like that he had never seen more than two or three Members in that gallery, and therefore, so far as the accommodation of Members of the House was concerned, that gallery was absolutely useless. There was a good deal behind this Motion. As a matter of fact it would tend to good relations between this country and countries on the Continent of Europe if their proceedings were adequately and properly reported. He thought that ignorance was the beginning of misunderstanding, and misunderstanding was the beginning of anything. Half the great conflicts in the world, even the most devastating, had been the result of ignorance and misunderstanding, and when the conflict was over, as in the case of Russia and Japan, the calm historian had to find out the facts of the dispute. In his own time newspapers had made war, and he sometimes wondered whether newspapers did not make more wars than they made peace. He did not say that they made war except in this sense, that a match did not make a conflagration until it was applied to a magazine of powder, but sometimes the publication in newspapers of news that was true or false was as a match thrown into a magazine of passion between the nations and produced a conflagration and terrible effects. For instance, was it not the publication of the despatch describing the interview between the late Emperor William the First and Count Benedetti at Ems which made inevitable the great war between France and Germany? He dared say that when the Dogger Bank incident took place it was not the fault of the newspapers in this country that there was not war between us and Russia. What happened at the present moment? The proceedings of the House of Commons were practically unknown in all their vital reality to the countries on the Continent of Europe. There was undoubtedly an excellent agency—Reuter's—which sent what must necessarily be a brief account of their proceedings, but everybody knew that a mere dry record of speeches and answers gave no idea of the inner realities and history of that House. The manner in which the speeches were received, the tone in which the House listened to them, the temper in which the speaker spoke, were all part of the real life of that Assembly, which could only be described to the Continent of Europe by eye-witnesses. He thought that it would tend to bring about a better understanding between this and other countries if the proceedings of that Assembly, which was the great centre of light and heat, were to radiate throughout the countries of Europe. He should think his right hon. friend would blush with shame when he contrasted our action in this matter with the hospitality given to British journalists in Paris Berlin and Vienna.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) said the First Commissioner of Works had based his argument upon the difficulty of the structural alterations of the House, but he fancied that the right hon. Gentleman did not want to see foreign representatives of the Press present and only advanced structural alterations as a way of getting out of the difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman had appealed to the mover to withdraw his Motion entirely on the ground of the cost which would be entailed in the necessary alterations. He himself appealed to the hon. Member to withdraw the Motion on the ground that it was undesirable to have members of the foreign Press present at the proceedings of the British Parliament. In the opinion of the last speaker a great deal of the misunderstanding between nations would be smoothed over if reports were sent by representatives of the foreign Press direct from the Gallery, reflecting the exact tone of the speeches and the reception of those speeches. But if that argument were carried to its logical conclusion, what a peaceful and happy country Ireland would have been for the last century, represented as she was so well in the Gallery by Irish Pressmen and having every possible remark and attitude of every Irish speaker in the House sent across with perfect accuracy to their constituents. The argument of the hon. Member was not a strong argument to advance when tested in that way, and the same would apply to the admission of the Press of foreign countries. We were at peace with all the foreign nations of the world at the present time.

[An Hon. Member: Except your own]. It was most remarkable when the House considered the attention Irish Unionists gave to the speeches of hon. Members below the gangway that they should not have some reciprocity from them.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): We are absolutely spellbound.

Captain CRAIG thought that if foreign countries were represented by their own Press in the Gallery the argument which had been used by the hon. Member opposite in favour of universal peace might be used with equal effect to stir up trouble between this and other countries. Therefore, in his opinion, that argument was not well founded. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion had suggested that not only should the foreign Press be allowed in the Gallery, but that they should also be allowed in the lobby with the same freedom as the Press of this country. That was a proposition which he should vote against because, in his opinion, it would not be to the advantage of this country to have the foreign Press representatives crowding the lobby of the House. Everybody who had travelled abroad must have been struck by the ability with which foreign newspapers reflected what was said in the British Parliament. He had often been struck with the remarkably true manner in which the utterances of Parliament were summarised and reflected in foreign newspapers by the present agencies, the Central News and Reuter's; no foreign Press representative in the Gallery could get a clearer view of the case than was presented by the two agencies he had named. He submitted that this question ought only to be dealt with after full accommodation had been made in the Press Gallery for the British and Colonial Press. He could not himself conceive why such an outcry should be made with regard to having the foreign Press in the Gallery after the outcry made by the German Press. At the present moment Count von Bulow himself had to postpone indefinitely an important statement he desired to make, owing to the action of the German Press. If the speeches made in this House were to be reported fully in foreign countries it was better that they should be reported by a Press which was absolutely free from the bias of the political parties of those countries. It had always been held that the news sent to foreign countries by the British Press had been a fair comment upon what occurred in the House and the summaries of the speeches made had been accurate summaries. The mover of the Resolution in the course of his speech had suggested that the Colonial Press should also be admitted, but unfortunately he had not incorporated "Colonial Press" in his Resolution and it would be out of order to amend his Resolution by moving to insert "Colonial Press"; therefore if the Resolution was carried it would not help the Colonial Press, but simply open the Gallery to foreign journalists. If the Motion went to a division he should vote against it.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said the mover of the Resolution had expressed the opinion that if foreign reporters were admitted to the Press Gallery and reported directly what took place in the House, it would lead to the reduction of armaments and be in the interests of peace. He was, however, afraid that the throwing open of the Press Gallery would not altogether have the same effect which the hon. Gentleman anticipated, although he certainly believed that if the reporters of foreign newspapers were present in the Press Gallery it would impose a useful check upon the references made in this House to foreign powers which were too often arrogant and ill-informed. His hon. friend in his speech slipped in this respect, when he referred to the Russians as "suffering under an autocratic *regime*." If there were reporters from Russia in the gallery, he was not sure it would altogether tend to international amity to have speeches of that kind reported. If his hon. friend had lived in Russia as he had done, he would doubt whether it was in any way a correct description of what happened in Russia, or of the feelings of the people towards their governors. They had, at any rate in parts of Russia, he knew, profound regard for the Imperial family, and the villages enjoyed communal democratic government. Then the hon. Member for Leicester had expressed his opinion that such was the condition of Russia, that it did not become this country to enter into any diplomatic relations with her until she had altered her constitution and adopted that form which he happened to approve, and prescribed for the round world. He believed that the presence of reporters of foreign papers would be a useful check upon his hon. friend when next he adopted that attitude. When the question of the Congo was before the House the other night, hon. Member after hon. Member said that Belgium would behave well if she only knew what she was about, and understood the circumstances of the case. Belgium was, therefore, represented as being wanting in intelligence and knowledge of its own business, though not apparently in humanity. But when Macedonia came before the House, the Turk was at once credited with cruelty. That was an entirely false conception of the Turk, as he thought every hon. Member who had been in Turkey would agree. Nothing was said about the Greeks and Bulgarians there, who cut one another's throats and made most of the mischief, but the Turks, because they were Mahomedans, were said to be cruel. Cruelty was apparently a characteristic of Mahomedans in the eyes of hon. Members who knew nothing of Islam and its followers. Was it desirable that such speeches should be published more fully for the benefit of other nations? Then another hon. Member was so impressed by the kind treatment he had received in Russia that he was prepared on the spot to give Russia a port in the Persian Gulf. He did not think that was a desirable thing to be reported in Russia where they might imagine that the hon. Member's opinion carried weight. The hon. Member for Salford to-day wanted the Foreign Minister to interfere with the internal arrangements of Japan, because he imagined they were ill-treating the inhabitants of Formosa, apparently he did not know of Japan's unparalled success in civilising the worst of savages, but in any case, it was no business of ours. That was another thing which it was highly undesirable should be reported at greater length for the benefit of foreign nations than it was likely to be under the existing system. This was his objection to the Motion; otherwise, it had his general support. When the right hon. Gentleman said that he could not provide room for foreign reporters, he thought he did himself an injustice, for he had always regarded him as a kind of benevolent wizard who could do anything for hon. Members. He believed, if the First Commissioner wished to provide the accommodation, he could do it, though he did not think it was fair to describe the right hon. Gentleman as having in despair "fallen back upon pipes and flues." Nor could he commiserate with the First Commissioner if he had to fall back on a pipe, though if he fell back on a flue he hoped the flue would not prove as overheated, as he (Mr. Rees) regarded the House to be. He was quite aware the House wanted to get on to something else, some new and original subject like tariff reform; and he would not keep it away from its choice; but he did say that hon. Members had very much underestimated the information which under existing circumstances was supplied to foreign nations. He could say that in St. Petersburg, where the Press censorship was the most rigorous in Europe, folks were well informed every morning of what went on in the British House of Commons if they cared to be so informed; and, if little attention was paid to speeches such as he had referred to, and if they were veiled in a decent obscurity, it was a very fortunate circumstance, and he hoped it would continue to prevail.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL said it was very comforting to know that, if the oration to which they had just listened were published and printed in all parts of the world, it would be strictly innocuous. They had heard the pronouncement from a great leader of the party which represented all the wealth, intellect, and intelligence of Ireland that that wealth, intellect, and intelligence must be kept and confined to a limited circle—themselves, of course—and that foreigners must be excluded from the benefit of it. He must congratulate the hon. Member on his oration. For the first time he had made a speech without dragging in the Union Jack or the Union on which all their happiness was supposed to depend. He now came with all kindness to the speech of his right hon. friend, who had the one saving gift of humour. He was able to say with a conscience which would have done credit to an Anglican curate that there was no room and that he was compelled by considerations of space not to entertain, beyond the expression of a pious opinion—a kind of doxology —the question of providing accommodation for the reporters of the foreign Press. His right hon. friend had really a genius for architecture, and he would have done extremely well as a twentieth century Wren. He believed, however, that if the reporters of the foreign Press were given accommodation in the side galleries by the extension of the Reporters' Gallery three or four seats no one would be in the slightest degree embarrassed. Although the right hon. Gentleman had the advantage of being younger than he (Mr. MacNeill) he had had considerable Parliamentary experience, and could recall the days—he must have been under the gallery in short-coats—when any hon. Member could espy strangers and have the reporters excluded. There was, however, one quarter of the House in which twenty-five seats were kept separate and distinct for gentlemen who did not use them, except upon very rare occasions. He could not for the life of him see why the Peers' Gallery should not be open to the reporters. They would make use of it, and the Peers did not seem to want it. He would take instances within the recollection of all. Yesterday, there was what, in the Tory mind, was a full dress debate. The late Colonial Secretary got up and with enormous power delivered an oration on the vexed question of South Africa, *supra* Peckham. Every seat in the House was full. Some came from interest; he came for amusement. The Peers' Gallery, however, was empty, except for one solitary Peer, whilst many people would have liked to have got in and many Press representatives would have been delighted to have occupied the seats there. To-day, one of the most delightful and eloquent tributes ever passed by one statesman on another, was delivered to the memory of the Duke of Devonshire, a Peer of Peers. The House was filled and the galleries were filled, but in the Peers' Gallery there were six in a place which would have accommodated twenty-five. He was not a tremendous admirer of Peers, and he would not keep a portion of the people's House unoccupied for them, especially when they did not use it. It was absurd, and he really asked right hon. Gentlemen to think of the absurdity of it. He would be very sorry indeed if even one British or Irish reporter was excluded by accommodation being provided for the foreign Press. He regarded the presence of reporters of foreign newspapers who could catch the tone of the House, realise the proportions, and see things in their true light, to be of essential benefit to the peace and amity of the world. There was no doubt whatever about that. He would give them one slight instance to show what he meant. He would take care not to mention any name. Some eighteen months ago a gentleman, who got, he did not know by what preliminary methods, an Under-Secretaryship, made a fierce attack in regard to an important question, and, because there were not German, French, and other foreign reporters in the House who could have measured his intellectual and political stature, it was greatly magnified. He believed in Germany for months afterwards nurses used to hush children to sleep by saying: "The great Englishman is coming." They had been able to take the measure of that eminent statesman. The hon. Gentleman who had just come in and to whom he had referred as a budding statesman had, during the last six weeks, frequently interrogated the Government about the possibility of foreign invasion and had given an entirely false idea. If what occurred in that House was seen by foreign journalists and reporters, the whole thing would be quite different and the proper intellectual measure of the hon. Gentleman would be taken. But it was notorious to everyone who had been on the Continent, that foreign countries largely took their cue of the politics of this country and of what went on in that House from the mendacious columns of *The Times*. He believed that if there were foreign representatives present the malignant influence of that paper, which everyone in this country knew, or ought to know, was a public liar, would be curtailed. Reports of the debates in that House furnished in the columns of *The Times*, he was bound to say were, on the whole, fair reports and fair summaries. But with these reports which were fair there came malignant comments which were taken in many places, even by well-informed Continental journalists, as gospel truths. If three or four seats were given to representatives of foreign journals the greatest benefit would be secured.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) said he would not have risen but that he desired to make a practical suggestion. He hoped in anything he might say that he would be able to avoid the party references and the somewhat quarrelsome tone which had been introduced in some of the later speeches. It would be impossible for him to oppose the Motion which his hon. friend had made. It would be unfriendly to the profession to which he had belonged all his life, and it would be unfriendly to foreign people, with whom he desired this country should always be on terms of the greatest cordiality. He agreed with the mover of the Resolution that its acceptance would tend towards peace and make for friendship between the nations of Europe. One had to look at the matter, however, not only from the point of view of the foreign newspapers, but from the point of view of the British and Irish newspapers. The right hon. Gentleman had told them there were physical difficulties in the way of finding room for representatives of the foreign Press. He was against any encroachment on the space that was found to be necessary for our own newspapers, but he was also against any encroachment upon the space which Members of that House enjoyed whether on the floor or in the gallery. Any further limitation of their room would only tend to revive those septennial demands for a new horseshoe-shaped House of Commons to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. He, for his part, had no desire whatever to see the House either enlarged or diminished. The suggestion he had to make was that if they could not take space from their own gallery or invent space in some other part of the House, they should at least find out how the space already allotted to the Press was allocated. The First Commissioner had told them that the matter was not in his Department, and that it was a matter for the authorities of the House. He had the greatest possible respect for the authorities of the House, but he did not know how to get at them. They were the one power regulating their affairs which appeared to him to be inaccessible to members. But perhaps the First Commissioner himself would be able to bring his great influence to bear to obtain from them some statement of the manner in which the fifty or so seats in the Press Gallery were at present allocated. He believed at one time a map was drawn of the Gallery with the names of the newspapers entitled to seats there, just as one sometimes saw a dinner plan on those occasions when one was invited to a great banquet. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he would find out, and make the information available to the whole House, the newspapers which were represented in the Gallery and the number of places which they enjoyed, so that they might find out whether the right newspapers were admitted. He suspected that the allocation of seats there was of some considerable standing, and that it was not frequently revised. The suggestions he would make was that the allocation of seats should be revised from time to time, and that at pretty frequent periods, so that there might not be seats occupied by what he might call deadheads, without disrespect, he hoped, to his Press friends above—by those who were not really reporting the proceedings of the House, but were looking on for dillettante or artistic or some other purposes. He would yield to none in his admiration of the skill of the professional gentlemen who attended their debates or in his estimate of the importance to every Member of the House and to the constituencies which they represented of the services which those patient gentlemen rendered to them. He was sure one must pity them, for many a time Members felt impelled to escape from the chamber, but the professional gentleman upstairs had to sit it out. He hoped right hon. Gentlemen might even yet say something in the direction of meeting this point, as the very fact that the seats were so few and necessarily so restricted by physical limitations should make them extremely careful that they were allotted in the best and most effectual way possible.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he did not wish to prolong the discussion. He wished to call the First Commissioner's attention to one fact alone. He would find if he referred to the Report of the Committee on the Parliamentary Debates very valuable evidence to guide him in this matter, and amongst other things he would find it proved beyond all doubt that the official reporting staff in the Gallery were entirely inadequately accommodated. Whatever might be said of the newspapers generally, metropolitan and provincial, everybody must agree that those who were engaged in reporting the official records of Parliament ought to have the very best places and every facility given them. He quite agreed with his hon. friend opposite that if it were possible it would be very good to have representatives from every part of the world. There was nothing to be objected to in that, but before any step was taken the Report of that Select Committee ought to be acted upon, and proper arrangements made to give the Official Parliamentary reporting staff proper accommodation which they had not at present. However the newspapers might be accommodated it was a fact that those who were engaged in compiling the records of Parliament were not properly accommodated. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would bear that in mind and get the recommendation of the Committee acted upon.

*SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire) said he did not wish to give a silent vote on this question. He would like to associate himself with the mover and seconder of the Resolution, and to instance the case of India, which had not been alluded to. Probably the hon. Member who moved the Resolution meant to include that great dependency in the term "Colonies." It would, he thought, considerably improve our relations with the people of India if they had reports of the proceedings of that House coming to them at first hand from any representative that their newspapers chose to send to Westminster. Considering the great number of questions which were being constantly put to the Secretary for India, India evidently loomed largely in their discussions. He had been very much impressed with the great interest which some of the Colonies, *e.g.* Canada, took in the debates of the House. He thought the great newspapers of Canada should have facilities for being directly represented in the House, and if that could not be done for lack of accommodation in the Press Gallery, surely the representatives of those newspapers might be allowed to penetrate if not into the Chamber itself, at least into the inner Lobby. At present their position was as ignominious and unhappy as that of the wives of hon. Members, who had to wait at a distance, until the Members whom they sought had been hunted up all over the building. If the correspondents could not hear the speeches, then they might be able to catch some of the echoes, and that arrangement might prevent some of those misunderstandings with European nations which they all deplored.

*MR. SMEATON said that the right hon. Gentleman had met him in a friendly tone and had given conditional promises of which he had taken note—to the effect that if circumstances were to alter, the difficulties might be overcome with time, money, and good intentions. He regarded those words as conveying a desire to make the concession when opportunity occurred—and that need not be far off. Under these circumstances he would not divide the House, and he asked leave to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester) said that he did not know whether, having regard to the hour, hon. Members would desire him to proceed. [Cries of "Go on."] Very well; in that case he would move: "That this House, regarding with anxiety the increase of unemployment among the working classes, is of opinion that with a view to its diminution such a reform of our fiscal system should be adopted as would check unfair competition, lead to a reduction in the hostile tariffs of foreign countries, provide a basis for mutual preference between the Mother country and the Colonies, and increase the demand for labour at home." He thought that no apology was necessary for bringing this subject before the House again, because in a time of record exports and imports the problem of unemployment was acute and the gravity of the question could not be ignored. A Liberal morning paper, the *Daily News*, had made the following statement—

> "Men who never walk in unemployed processions, men who would scorn to register at the town hall, men who would rather die than accept the hospitality of the guardians of the poor, are to-day to the number of hundreds of thousands seeking employment."

In support of this view let them consider the statistics with regard to emigration. Ten years ago our emigration was 60,000; in 1906 it had risen to 195,000; and last year it was 240,000. In Germany, with a population 50 per cent. greater, emigration was but a fraction of what it was here. Yet formerly the emigration in both countries was about the same. In Germany, with an altered fiscal system, and a population increasing at a greater rate than here, the emigration was stationary, and ranged from 25,000 to 30,000 a year. In this country last year four out of every hundred in skilled trades were unemployed, against one per hundred in Germany. At the present time our average had risen to six, compared with two or two and a half in Germany. We had a far larger proportion out of work in the unskilled trades, but if only the same proportion were taken there could not be less than 600,000. The future held out a prospect of an increase of the number of people engaged in casual work—the most unsatisfactory of all. Mr. Sadler said that British parents were less inclined than ever to apprentice their boys because trades changed so frequently that there was no permanency of employment. [A Voice: "Machinery."] No, it was not machinery, but unfair competition. A few years ago they were told that this country had fallen behind in commercial enterprise because the people lacked technical education. Now, however, large sums had been expended to make our technical schools efficient, but what was the use of that if, when the pupils had learned their crafts, there was no work for them? They were in the position of the owner of the horse who received a bill from the veterinary surgeon: "To curing your horse until he died, £2 10s." The evil of unemployment existed; it was pressing, chronic, and increasing. The Labour Socialist Party had put forward their cure in two Bills this session, the "Right-to-Work" Bill, now known as the "Will-not-Work" Bill, and the Bill to limit employment in any trade to eight hours—a proposal so riddled by objections in the discussion that the Leader of the Party last Wednesday desired to withdraw the Bill, and dare not face the ordeal of a division. But what had the Government done? They had been two years in office with a Labour Member at the head of the Local Government Board. [MINISTERIAL Cheers.] Yes, hon. Members opposite cheered him now.

EARL WINTERTON: They do not cheer him in Battersea.

MR. GOULDING said that the Government had not even sketched out the general lines of a policy to deal with the problem. Not having a policy of their own, this Government of Royal Commissions might doubtless have appointed a further Commission, but in their mental destitution they postponed all action. They waited in the hope that a Commission appointed by the late Government to inquire into the Poor Law system, and to report on the treatment of the aged poor, the infirm, the unworkables, and tramps, might suggest how work was to be found for willing, able workmen seeking work to-day. What a mockery it all was! The Secretary to the Local Government Board came forward with the proposal that women should be turned out of the industrial life of the country, without any regard to the number of homes that would be deprived of the breadwinner if such a cruel policy were carried out. It would be interesting to note how the Under-Secretary for the Colonies treated this proposal of his colleague when he returned to Lancashire, if prophecy was true, for re-election in the near future. The President of the Board of Trade admitted that we were sick, or going to be sick, so he would summon all the captains of industry to confer on the condition of the nation, but they must leave their fiscal notions on the door-mat. In other words, the surgeons were to be summoned, but they must leave their operating instruments outside. Yet in his Patents Act the right hon. Gentleman had prohibited all competition from outside in certain trades, and made possible monopolies, while all that tariff reformers desired was the imposition of a tariff to safeguard national industries from unfair competition. What was the lesson that had been taught in recent times? If in a period of booming trade there was this unemployment, what would be the position when we witnessed bad trade, and the lean years were on us? If work would not go round for the people seeking employment in time of boom, what would be the case in time of trade depression? Was there no remedy possible but the enforced and increased emigration of some of the most promising of our working people? He believed that there was. When we adopted free trade we had no rivals to fear. To-day the matter was different, and we could no longer continue with impunity to give our competitors the immense advantage of free access to our markets, and at the same time endure every restriction they chose to impose against our goods desiring to enter their markets. Tariff reformers did not say that all unemployment was due to unfair competition and hostile tariffs, but they did say that on the evidence of employers and workmen a great part was due to these causes, and they proposed by tariffs to remedy what was possible.

MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead): Will the hon. Gentleman explain what unfair competition there is in the building trade, which employs 1,000,000 hands?

MR. GOULDING said that if the hon. Member would wait he would come to the trades in a moment. Did the hon. Member know the amount of goods produced for the building trade under sweated conditions? Last year we imported into this country £150,000,000 worth of manufactured goods, and some £80,000,000 must have been spent on labour. It was considered that a portion of those goods could be equally well made in this country, and that reasonable security would attract capital here which was now invested in foreign lands by our own people. Let them take the case of iron and steel. Did anyone suggest that that trade had not been injured? Fifteen years ago we were first in the production of steel and and iron, five years ago we had fallen to second place, and to-day we held a bad third. The United States and Germany had both passed us. We were under no disadvantage in regard to supply of material, the skill of our workmen, or the efficiency of our methods. We had only one advantage. We had the advantage of having the best coal produced anywhere at our very door. We started the competition at the top of the world; the position had been wrested from us by a deliberate policy of securing the large market at home first, and then dumping their surplus here in our open markets. To-day ship plates were offered in our markets at a price at which we could not produce them, and we were threatened with further disaster. Then with regard to the silk trade, in almost every branch of that industry there was less employment. Mills were closed at Macclesfield, Nottingham, Derby, Manchester, and London. Firms who formerly weaved silk goods now simply were makers up of German, Swiss, and Italian manufactures. The trades that had been killed or crippled were known to all. [AN HON. MEMBER: What trades? How many?] The hon. Member knew well enough. He was not going to be drawn aside by side issues. If he wanted more information he could get it in the Budget debates—at any rate Members on the Unionist side of the House would raise these matters on all possible occasions. He heard last week of the case of a manufacturer in the Midlands who until recently employed several hundred hands in his factory. He had ceased to manufacture, and he was now simply a buyer and seller, and the men had been dismissed. What were the facts? That man had as a manufacturer to face the keenest competition, and ultimately similar goods were sold in the markets he supplied at actually cost price. On inquiry he found that they were made in Germany. On communicating with this German rival, he found that the price was to be still further reduced, but that if he cared to do so the German would let him have what he wanted for sale at present price. He consulted his trade-unionist workmen to learn if they would be prepared, by taking reduced wages, to join him in fighting against the German. They rightly declined, seeing no limit to what this might entail, as security against unfair competition did not exist. The manufacturer, as a consequence, came to terms with the German and converted himself into a buyer and seller, and thus made his profit while he was relieved of his responsibility as an employer. But if he was going on with his trade it was the intention of the German firm to sell the goods which he manufactured below cost price. [MINISTERIAL Cries of "What goods?" "What trade?"] Hon. Members opposite would like to indulge in inquisitorial business, but he was not going to submit to it. Had hon. Gentlemen opposite such a high opinion of the Members of this House as to believe that a Member would get up and state a thing which to his own knowledge was untrue? [Renewed cries of "Name," and "What goods?"] In spite of the interruption he would continue the argument. This manufacturer came to his workmen and told them what was the deal proposed by the German manufacturer, and asked his workmen if they and their trade union would stand in with him in the competition with the German manufacturer by taking reduced wages. [Renewed interruption and cries of "Where," and "Name."] The workmen rightly declined to do so, because they had no security whatever as regarded their future liabilities, and there would be no safeguard for their trade, and their wages would be permanently reduced. What happened? The manufacturer as a consequence came to terms with the German. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He never did; and renewed cries of "Name," and "What goods?" "What trade?"] He declined to give the information, and dismissed the observation of the hon. Gentleman opposite as a specimen of good manners of the party which contained a great number of Gentlemen who were not English five years ago. [Renewed interruption, and MINISTERIAL ironical cries of "Manners."] This gentleman had ceased to be a manufacturer. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Of what?"] had turned his factory into a warehouse, had become a buyer and a seller, and was making his profit while his employees were scattered abroad. [Renewed cries of "What goods?" "What trade?"]

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I would not interrupt, but of course, at this hour there will be no opportunity for reply. I therefore think we are entitled to ask the hon. Member, not with a view to identification, but of testing the effect on the whole trade, what was the particular class of goods? There may be special reasons why this gentleman gave up his factory.

MR. GOULDING said that the gentleman was a manufacturer of lamp-holders. [MINISTERIAL laughter.] He dared say that hon. Gentlemen who laughed would much prefer that those lamp-holders should be manufactured in Germany. At any rate, 400 hands who were getting a living in manufacturing those goods were now dispersed abroad. [Cries of "Where?"] What he was asking the Party opposite, who were champions of Free Trade, was, what was to happen to the workmen who were thrown out of employment? They knew that Germany and the United States were largely increasing their productive capacity, and they were casting on these shores their surplus goods which they could not get rid of at home. The position was entirely different from what it was sixty years ago. They wanted to meet these altered conditions with a complete change in our fiscal system—broadening the basis of taxation—safeguarding national industries against unfair competition, giving us the means to negotiate with foreign countries, and providing the basis for mutual trade advantages within the Empire, and supporting our best customers. He desired to deal with one point alone. All parties were alarmed at the naval policy which had been promulgated by Germany, whose strength lay in this condition of unemployment of our people. If the German naval policy was persisted in a vast expenditure would be imposed on this country, for both parties in the State were agreed on the maintenance of the two-Power standard. We had at present no effective means of getting Germany to re-consider her policy. But supposing we had a tariff? Did hon. Members think for one moment that Germany, sending the greatest portion of her exports to this country, would not hesitate if we had the power by levying a tax on her goods entering this country to raise the money for the extra ships which her mad policy forced upon us. The Member for Glasgow in his Amendment rightly stated that the greatest obstacle that could be erected against the policy of the Labour Socialist Party was the policy of tariff reform linked with Imperialism, and he readily understood their position. How were the Government meeting the Socialists? The Bills they had proposed this session if passed must increase the number of the unemployed, and were mainly concerned with party politics. The President of the Local Government Board might raise laughter in the House about expeditions to soup kitchens, but wretched men and women outside seeking employment in order that they might buy bread would take a different view. The writing was on the wall, and whenever opportunity was afforded them the electors would in his opinion declare for a policy of tariff reform as alone likely to give more employment, and at the same time, defeat the dangerous policy of Socialists. He begged to move.

*MR. FLETCHER (Hampstead) in seconding the Resolution, saw that wherever he went, he found there was a feeling amongst the artizan classes of the intense unpopularity of the Government. He had said to them "Where are your leaders? Why do you not tell them what you have been telling me, so that they might put pressure on the Government?" When Cardinal Manning, before he was a teetotaler, explained to an audience that owing to the weakness of his digestion he was obliged to take a little stimulant, somebody said "Change your doctor." Cardinal Manning did so with success. To the artizan classes of this country who wanted work he gave the same advice "Change your leaders," and there would be fewer men out of work. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech spoke for more than two-and-a half hours without mentioning the unemployed, and in the King's Speech there was not a word about unemployment. What the Government had done had been to increase unemployment. Although when in Opposition they had denounced doles, they now relied upon doles. They denounced the Agricultural Rates Act with bitterness as a dole, but they had not been in office two or three months before they commenced doles. They had given a dole of £25,000 to necessitous school areas and a dole of £200,000 to the unemployed, which was to be repeated this year. They were also feeding their small holders with doles. Their Small Holdings Act would be an absolute failure. What the Government should do was to put a small duty on hops. If they did not put a duty on imported foreign hops there was not a county in England interested in hop growing who would not discard the Liberal candidates at the next general election. Small duties such as he advocated were the only means of enabling men without capital to make a living upon the small holdings which had been provided by the Government. There would be no real danger in these duties and there would be no real increase of cost or very little to the consumer, because production would be stimulated by them and many thousands of young men would be able to put money in their pockets if the duties were imposed. Surely it was better to pay a little more for their goods and provide employment for thousands of their fellow countrymen than to pay a little less and be obliged to devote the difference to the relief of pauperism. He begged to second.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, regarding with anxiety the increase of unemployment among the working classes, is of opinion that with a view to its diminution such a reform of our fiscal system should be adopted as would check unfair competition, lead to a reduction in the hostile tariffs of foreign countries, provide a basis for mutual preference between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and increase the demand for labour at home."—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I have only a few minutes in which to reply on this subject and, therefore, I cannot hope to follow the hon. Gentlemen who moved and seconded the Amendment in their observations, but there are just one or two things I should like to say. After listening to their speeches any one who knew nothing at all about the condition either here or in foreign countries would come to the conclusion that this was the only country where there was any unemployment. In this country we have 100,000 men out of work according to the hon. Member. [Cries of "Six hundred thousand."]

MR. GOULDING was understood to say that he took the figure 600,000, proportionately, from the Returns of the skilled trades.

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: That shows the loose way in which tariff reform statistics are prepared. Of course, nothing of the kind can be done. We have the statistics of the building trade and the shipbuilding trade and both are subject to fluctuations in every country, and nothing we do can prevent violent fluctuations in those trades. But, to take such trades as agricultural labourers and those engaged in transport, the fluctuations are very small. Therefore, when the hon. Member takes such a case as the building trade and tries to draw a general inference from it, he shows that he has not studied the elements of the problem he proposes to treat in this sweeping fashion. Let us take what happens in Germany. If the hon. Member will look at the Report issued by his own Government five years ago, he will find that in Berlin alone there were 93,000 people practically out of work in 1901. In London, if one takes the proportion to population, what should we have? We should have 240,000 persons practically in the same position. Will any one tell me that in 1901 or in the present year there are 240,000 people in London out of work who are capable of working? No answer. In Berlin at the present moment there are 45,000 men out of work. That is the result of investigation.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley: Whose investigation.

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: An investigation by the officials of the Board of Trade, which I will lay on the Table in a very short time. Let us take what is happening in America, a tariff country. This is the result of the investigation of *The Times*—surely not very partial to the free trade case—

"In New York there are 34 per cent. of workmen unemployed. There are some hopeful signs in other industrial centres, but on a conservative estimate, taking the country throughout, from one-quarter to one-third of those usually employed in all trades and industries are at the present moment paid off."

Why does not the hon. Member say that? To tell the workmen out of work in this country that they are out of work because we have no tariff, knowing at the same time that in one of the highest tariff countries one-third or one-quarter are out of work—wilfully, deliberately—I will not say with knowledge, but it ought to be knowledge—withholding these relevant and important facts from people who must always be trembling in any country from fear of losing their employment, is unfair, dishonest. The hon. Member of all things in the world chose shipbuilding. His speech is the speech he has delivered on fifty tariff reform platforms where there was no one to reply. Did he ever inform his audience what the shipbuilding proportions are? Take last year. [The right hon. Gentleman was interrupted at this point by loud Opposition cries of "Peckham," "Resign," "This is an answer to your figures," "You will be unemployed directly," and "Free trade is dead," accompanied by loud Opposition cheers.]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order, order.

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am not disposed to complain of the interruption. I have been through that stage myself. I am afraid I have taken part in similar demonstrations. [MINISTERIALIST cries: Not on beer.] If hon. Members will allow me to proceed, I was dealing with shipbuilding, when a result apparently came in which, I think, has reference to another trade, and a much less beneficial one, certainly having nothing to do with water. Let us look at the figures of last year. ["Let us look at the figures of to-night."] I have only three or four minutes, and I do not care how bye-elections are decided if we are allowed to state the whole facts. What are the facts? Last year we built 1,600,000 tons in our yards—in this broken-down country that cannot provide employment. Take all the shipbuilding yards in the world, including the yards where they build for the lakes of America, where we cannot get a ship in. All the rest of the world's shipbuilding put together comes only to 1,170,000 tons. Let the hon. Member tell his audiences that we are maintaining our supremacy. The hon. Member quoted building. Why is the building trade bad? Because money is dearer. Why is money dearer? Because hon. and right hon. Gentlemen spent £220,000,000 on the South African War—[Renewed interruption.] I have a suggestion to make to hon. Members. They have made their speeches. There has been no opportunity of reply. This is a first-class matter. On Tuesday night a second Motion is to be moved from our side. I suggest that the debate shall be renewed then. In the meantime I will not prevent the House from coming to a division.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): I hope the House will allow me to say a word. I understand the right hon. Gentleman, who has just spoken, has made an offer——

And it being Eleven of the Clock the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday next.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901, (LAUNDRIES).

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester) in rising to move "That the Special Order of the Secretary of State, dated the 26th day of December, 1907, allowing as regards laundries that separate departments of work may be treated as separate factories or workshops, be annulled," asked the House to give him their indulgence for a few minutes. On the 17th February, the Home Secretary laid on the Table of the House a statutory rule or Order numbered 1010, in which he made some exceptions under the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901 (Laundries). The object of the statutory Order was to make certain conditions, not ordinarily provided for by law, regarding the hours and conditions of employment in laundries, and the effect of it he would, if the House would permit him, try to show in as few sentences as possible was to create absolute chaos in the administration of the Factory Law so far as it related to hours in laundries. Under the present system the proprietor of a laundry might choose three absolutely different provisions as regarded hours. He might work the usual factory or workshop hours with a special variation of the Saturday half-holiday; he might work eleven and a half hours per day in one of three schemes beginning at 6, 7, or 8 a.m., and ending at 7, 8 or 9 p.m. respectively, with a set of complicated conditions attached; or if he gave up his right to overtime after sixty hours per week, he can work upon another scheme of hours. That was the law as it stood, but the right hon. Gentleman, not apparently satisfied with a law so complex that his own inspectors had reported time after time that it could not be put into operation, first simplified the law last year, but had now sanctioned another variation. The right hon. Gentleman he saw shook his head, but if he would turn to the annual report of the chief inspector for the year 1906 he would see that Miss Sadler reported—

> "This juggling with forms and hours has rendered evasion of the Act extremely easy. I took, with the help of a colleague, quite four hours one day inquiring into the hours on a large laundry where there were five different sets or departments."

Might he also refer him to the statement of another lady inspector. Miss Tracy in the same year reports—

> "In the matter of hours the same old difficulty in adequately checking still arises, although the tendency is towards shorter and earlier hours. . . . . The proposed alteration in the law affecting laundries is hailed with gladness by almost every manager, for they suffer almost equally with the workers in the present state of the law."

So that the right hon. Gentleman's own inspectors had reported that it was practically impossible to administer a law so generous in its elasticity. The right hon. Gentleman had, moreover, had deputation after deputation from societies such as women's trade unions and the women's industrial council, begging him to cease that elasticity of administration so that some accurate system might take its place; but now the effect of this Statutory Order, for the annulment of which he asked the House to vote, would be to make the law more elastic. In a large laundry, according to some of the factory inspectors, there would be as many as five or six departments, and if this Statutory Order was permitted to become operative, each one of these five or six departments might constitute itself a separate laundry, and women might work in one one day and in another the next, and it would be absolutely impossible to keep the nominal check upon the extension of the hours of work. By shifting employees from one department to another each day, the regulations as to the hours of work might be evaded. The safeguards against this were altogether inadequate. He was engaged last year after the Laundries Bill went through in drafting a leaflet which was to be sent among laundry workers stating what the law actually was. He had associated with him three or four lawyers and traders and men who were accustomed to the administration of the Factory Law, and in consultation they found it impossible to draft a statement which was so simple and plain that they could hand it to laundry employees, so that they might be able to protect their own interests by knowing what the law was. There was another point to which he would like to refer. He would like to draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that the grand result of this Statutory Order would be to increase the number of hours of married women's work in factories. There was no industry in the country in which married women were employed in such large numbers as in laundries, and the latest figure showed that in London alone there were 27,204 married women employed as against 20,158 unmarried women, and women could work in London on Saturday up to nine o'clock. There was an agitation just now in regard to the sacredness of the family, and some of them were told that they had lifted their hands against the sacredness of the British family, and yet a Liberal Home Secretary came down to the House and asked it to sanction a Statutory Order which might have the effect of employing 27,204 married women on Saturday nights up to nine o'clock. It was idle to pretend that under any such system there could be proper factory inspection; it was preposterous in the extreme. They found the right hon. Gentleman the other day informing them in reply to a question he put, that he had actually granted 230 certificates under this Statutory Order already. It therefore appeared that 230 laundries had applied to be divided up in this preposterous manner, and the right hon. Gentleman had also said that three districts were not included in these figures. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to inform the House that in the case of every one of these requests personal inspection was resorted to before the certificates were issued, because it was a most extraordinary thing that the Factory Inspectors' Department could do so much work in regard to these laundries when they could leave so many thousand factories uninspected every year? And yet the Order implies that the inspectors should know from personal knowledge something about the laundry to which they were issuing their certificate. He ventured to say that these certificates which had been granted had been granted without investigation as to whether the circumstances of the laundry warranted the issue of a certificate or not. The right hon. Gentleman would remember that when his predecessor in office introduced a Factory Bill in 1900, the outstanding feature of that was what had long been known as the relay system, but this Statutory Order was a re-introduction of the relay system into the laundry. At that time the whole Labour Party and kindred organisations issued memoranda and suggested Amendments to the Conservative proposals of 1900, and all these attacked the relay system which was re-established by the Bill, and that was why they heard no more of that measure, and yet by a Statutory Order, this abominable and objectionable relay system was being re-enacted under most unnecessary circumstances. The right hon. Gentleman would remember that in 1844 when that system existed an influential deputation of factory inspectors visited the Home Office and laid their views before it, and owing to the impossibility of inspecting under the relay system it was ultimately knocked on the head. This Statutory Order made it absolutely impossible for them to inspect accurately; it put a premium upon the illegal employment of women; it made it easier for employers illegally to extend the period beyond which women could be employed, and he hoped the House would support him in moving that it be annulled. He begged to move.

Mr. JAMES PARKER (Halifax) formally seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Special Order of the Secretary of State, dated the 26th day of December, 1907, allowing as regards laundries that separate departments of work may be treated as separate factories or workshops, be annulled."—(*Mr. Ramsay Macdonald.*)

*Mr. GLADSTONE hoped that the House would not annul the Order The hon. Member had attacked him as if he had been guilty of some political enormity, and he had never heard anyone attacked by an hon. Member in this House under such circumstances in a more menacing aspect or greater strength of language and with a weaker case. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman that an Order of this sort did require careful consideration, as it made exceptions under a particular clause in the Factory Act in regard to inspection, and he thought Parliament was entitled to understand why the exception had been made. The hon. Gentleman rose at that very late hour as if he had got the whole of the country at his back in condemning the Order, but he would tell the House what actually occurred in regard to it. As a matter of fact, this Order was published in the *Gazette* and had laid on the Table for the statutory time of forty days. It was sent to trade union headquarters according to the usual custom of the Home Office, so that the trade unions were fully apprised of its contents. The hon. Member himself knew about it, at all events he could have had information about it, and, as a matter of fact, only one communication against the Order reached the Home Office. That was from the Chairman of the Women's Trade Union, and it was dated 10th December. In reply to that letter, which raised perfectly legitimate points of criticism, he sent an answer which apparently was perfectly satisfactory, because no rejoinder was received, and he heard nothing more of opposition to the Order until he saw the hon. Member's notice on the Paper. Then the hon. Member came down and for a quarter of an hour spoke of him in a tone as if he had committed every crime under the sun. The laundry work of the country was carried out under conditions which the House would recognise as exceptional, so exceptional that Acts of Parliament had provided for special treatment. The laundry never worked to stock at all, and the work of each week had to be done in each week. It was received and sent out in each week. There were different processes as they all knew in connection with the work, one following another, and one process could not be commenced until the other was completed. It had to be done under great pressure from day to day, as hon. Members knew from the ordinary incidents of their own private lives. The washing had to go out at a certain time and come back at a certain time, and the work had to be done at high pressure. The result was that there was a fair demand for consideration in respect of the Rules which governed this matter, and it was quite reasonable to allow different periods of employment to be fixed for different departments of the work. He understood that the hon. Member made one or two objections, but first of all he brought against him the reports of two lady inspectors with regard to laundry work. But what did they refer to? They referred to the state of things which had existed under Section 103 of the Act of 1901 which was repealed by the Factory Act of last year and which undoubtedly did cause difficulty in the work of inspection.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I think the right hon. Gentleman is wrong.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I have the Act of 1907 here, and it says that Section 103 is hereby repealed.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I was referring to the quotations I made from Miss Sadler and the other lady, in which no reference is made to that section.

*MR. GLADSTONE: That is for the very good reason that the Act of last year had not been passed.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: It was not repealed then.

*MR. GLADSTONE: No, but the hon. Member quotes the state of things obtaining under a section which has been repealed. I have to deal with the conditions of things as they are now, and will be in the future. He agreed that great care had to be taken that no opportunity was given for the illegal extension of hours, but it was not true that inspectors would not know how many hours a particular woman was working, or that the provisions of the Act would be rendered nugatory. That was not so at all. All the newer laundries were constructed so that all the different processes could be carried out in one room. This arrangement was more convenient and far healthier, for the women employed. The Orders under the Act had hitherto provided that there must be structural separation, and it was objected that there was no such provision in this case. Care had however been taken to keep the premises in which the different processes were carried on so distinct that the inspectors could easily find out how long a particular woman or girl had been at work at a particular process. The new Order provided that each class of work was to be limited to one department; each department must be under separate and distinct management, and there must be somebody who was responsible for each department. Every such department must be carried on by separate and distinct persons so that no person might be employed first in one department and then in another. Further, and this was a most important point, the Order provided that there should be affixed to the walls a complete list of the persons employed in each department. These were the conditions so that the inspectors could come in and see how long a particular woman had been employed, and if the work was going on out of hours. If there was wrong employment they could run any case to ground. He had taken very great care when this Order was under consideration, and had consulted the factory inspectors, and talked it over with them in every detail, and he said now what he said before that the Chief Inspector of Factories did not think there was any danger in regard to it. If that was so, he maintained that having regard to the general convenience of those employed as well as those who employed them, this Order was perfectly justified on its merits. He had nothing more to add at the present moment except this. The hon. Member asked if all these individual cases had been investigated. He could not say definitely, but he had no doubt that all the laundries which had received certificates had been inspected and reported upon. He had no doubt about it in his own mind. If there was anything unsatisfactory in the working of the Order, it would be open to the Home Office to revoke the certificate. The possibility of the revoking of the certificate was, he thought, almost a sufficient guarantee that the provisions of the Order would not be abused. He could only repeat that they had given effect to the Act of Parliament and no one had hitherto taken any exception. Those well qualified persons to whom he had alluded were perfectly satisfied with his answer.

Mr. H. J. TENNANT: No.

Mr. GLADSTONE said he did not know what his hon. friend meant. If they were not satisfied, perhaps he would explain why no further action was taken. He thought when questions were put to him and a perfectly definite answer was given, if nothing further was said for two or three months they might assume that people were satisfied, and that there was nothing that required further answer. He put it to the House at any rate that he was cleared in the matter. He had endeavoured to invite attention and criticism; attention and criticism had been given, and there was no further opposition until the hon. Member rose that night. Under these circumstances, he asked the House to support him in refusing to accept this Motion.

Mr. H. J. TENNANT said the reason he ventured to interpose was that the Women Trades Union League was not satisfied with the answer of the Home Secretary. This was a matter on which he and his right hon. friend Sir Charles Dilke and other Members had been agitating for the last ten or twelve years, and they were perfectly tired of trying to get the Government Department to take up the case. All these Orders issued under the sanction of Parliament were making inspection more and more difficult every day.

Mr. GLADSTONE: This is the first Order I have made.

Mr. H. J. TENNANT said that this was an Order making each separate department of a factory a separate factory. Once they acknowledged that it was advisable to make separate Orders for different departments of one factory they made factory inspection extremely difficult—it would require almost a territorial army of inspectors to enforce the law. That was really what he rose to say. The difficulty of inspection at the present moment was enormous, and instead of the right hon. Gentleman making the task more simple he was making it more difficult. Anyone who listened to the enumeration of the various departments read out to-day would see how impossible it would be to enforce the regulations embodied in the Order. The Home Secretary had said that the Member for Leicester had accused him of having committed every political enormity.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I did not say that.

MR. H. J. TENNANT: Well, he addressed him as if he had accused him of committing every political enormity. He did not think any one would accuse the right hon. Gentleman of having committed any political enormity except the passing of the Laundry Act of last year, which was a very bad Act and had resulted in this particular Order being issued.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 26; Noes, 175. (Division List No. 50.)

AYES.

Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barnes, G. N.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Grayson, Albert Victor
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hills, J. W.
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Jowett, F. W.
Morpeth, Viscount
O'Grady, J.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Summerbell, T.
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Parker.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Beauchamp, E.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bryce, J. Annan
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Byles, William Pollard
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Essex, R. W.
Everett, R. Lacey
Findlay, Alexander
Forster, Henry William
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Haddock, George B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hobart, Sir Robert
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lupton, Arnold
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
M'Callum, John M.
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur asil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas

Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price,C. E.(Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley,W.E.B. (Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Scott,A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw,Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick,B
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soares, Ernest J.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Waterlow, D. S.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Objection having been taken,

MR. PIKE PEASE appealed to hon. Members not to press the objection. There was a very strong feeling in the country in favour of the Bill.

MR. HOLT: I think it is a most objectionable Bill, and I certainly cannot withdraw.

Second Reading deferred until 25th March.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) [EXPENSES] BILL.

On the Motion to go into Committee.

MR. CLAUDE HAY presumed the Motion related to a Bill before the House that afternoon. If that were so, he strongly objected to its being taken that night for the simple reason that when the measure was before the House the Government refused to give any information as to the amount of money involved or the number of persons to be employed—in fact they treated the House with contempt. They knew by experience that it was a farce to suppose Parliament would have any control over expenditure of this class.

MR. WHITELEY: This is not the Committee; it is only setting up the Committee. I ask for the ruling of the Speaker.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I object.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot say that the hon. Member has not the right to object.

Question deferred.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Deputy Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 25th March, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Standing Orders Committee—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the following Bills ought to be dispensed with—Ards and Bangor Railways; London United Tramways.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Cambrian Railways Company ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the Margate Corporation Bill ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision.

And that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Bristol Docks Bill [H.L.] ought not to be dispensed with.

Read, and agreed to.

Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

North British and Mercantile Insurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Stockport Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^{a}, and referred to the Examiners.

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to order).

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the rural districts of Limerick (No. 1) and Naas (No. 1) and the county of Westmeath and King's County—Was presented by the Lord Denman; read 1^{a}; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 39.)

PETITIONS.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition in favour: Of Cathcart Parish Council; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Returns of accidents and casualties as reported to the Board of Trade by the several railway companies in the United Kingdom during the three months ended 31st September, 1907, in pursuance of the Regulation of Railways Act (1871), with reports of the inspecting officers, assistant inspecting officers, and sub-inspectors of the Railway Department to the Board of Trade upon certain accidents which were inquired into. Part I. Returns of accidents.

MILE END, OLD TOWN.

Report to the President of the Local Government Board on a public inquiry held by F. J. Willis, barrister-at-law, one of the inspectors of the Local Government Board, into certain matters connected with the administration of the guardians of the hamlet of Mile End, Old Town.

EXPLOSION AT LORD ASHTOWN'S LODGE GLENAHIERY, COUNTY WATERFORD

Reports of County Inspector Jennings, Royal Irish Constabulary to the police authorities, dated 14th August, 1907, 17th August, 1907, and 14th September, 1907.

POSTAL AGREEMENT (MOZAMBIQUE).

Agreement between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Portuguese Colony of Mozambique, dated 22nd February, 1908.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of March, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

(Portuguese East Africa).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 16) Warrant, 1908, dated 26th February, 1908.

(Mauritius).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 17) Warrant 1908, dated 7th, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

First Report from the Select Committee made, to be printed, and to be considered on Monday next. (No. 37.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (The Marquess of RIPON): My Lords, I daresay your Lordships may be surprised at the Motion standing in my name on the Paper. The fact is this: I am informed that before the House adjourns, in all probability the Consolidated Fund Bill will come up from the other House. That Bill is, by general practice, put through all its stages at once, and as it is desirable to have a Commission to-morrow for giving the Royal Assent to certain Bills I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order No. XXXIX. so that the Consolidated Fund Bill may be included in that list. I need hardly tell your Lordships that I shall make no use of the power except for that particular purpose.

Moved, "That Standing Order No. XXXIX. be considered in order to its being suspended for this day's sitting."—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, I ask your Lordships to assent to the usual Motion at this time of the year regarding Bills coming up from the House of Commons. It is in the form to which your Lordships have agreed for many years, and I beg to move.

Moved, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 18th of June next: that no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill originating in this House shall be read a first time after Tuesday the 5th day of May next: that no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Thursday the 18th day of June next: That when a Bill shall have passed this House with amendments these orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended: that this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill later than Tuesday the 5th day of May next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the High Court of Justice after Thursday the 7th day of May next; that this House will not receive any Report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after Thursday the 7th day of May next."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Ordered, That the said orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall. (No. 38.)

LOTTERIES AND ADVERTISEMENTS.

Commons' Message of Monday last considered (according to order.)

Moved, "That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons as mentioned in the said Message to consider and inquire into the law: (1) As to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable" — (*The Lord Steward* (*E. Beauchamp*)—Agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their said Message to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, in rising to move the Second Reading of this Bill I must confess that I do so with a certain measure of hopefulness, having regard to the words spoken in this House last August by the noble Marquess, the Leader of the Opposition. With your Lordships' permission I will read a short extract from his speech on that occasion. The noble Marquess said—

> "Therefore, my Lords, if we refuse to read this Bill a second time this evening I trust it will be understood that we are in reality only doing that which the First Lord of the Admiralty has suggested that we should do—deferring the further consideration of this Bill and its consequences until a more opportune moment."

This statement must surely mean that the further consideration of the Bill—that is to say, the Committee stage—could not be entered upon at that time owing to the lateness of the session and I cannot but feel that the words contained the prospect of a Second Reading at any rate—a prospect which I hope will shortly be realised.

As the provisions of this Bill have already been described to your Lordships I do not propose in this instance to repeat them, but shall pass at once to a very brief sketch of the existing system of valuation in Scotland. Valuation is computed on a basis of annual rental value—that is to say, either the rent which is paid or the annual rental which the subject in its existing state might be reasonably expected to fetch. The valuation roll is drawn up by the burghs and counties, and in it is entered the annual rental value of each subject—that is, lands and heritages.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Annual value, not rental.

LORD HERSCHELL: I should have said annual value. I beg your Lordships' pardon. The drawing up of the roll is entrusted to an official called an assessor, who is appointed by the town or county council as the case may be. If the local authorities choose to appoint the surveyor for income-tax as their assessor, then the expense of drawing up the roll is defrayed by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, and the assessor is called a surveyor assessor. If, on the other hand, the authorities prefer to appoint some person other than the surveyor for income-tax, then the cost of the valuation is borne by the local authorities and the assessor is called a local assessor. At present—and this is a point I would ask your Lordships to note, as I propose referring to it when dealing with the question of expense—the total valuation of Scotland is, roughly speaking, £31,000,000. From this we must deduct £3,000,000 for railways and canals, leaving as the valuation to which this Bill applies £28,000,000. Of this, £15,000,000 are valued by surveyor assessors, the cost of the valuation, as I have already pointed out, being defrayed by the Exchequer. The remaining £13,000,000 are valued by local assessors, and the expense of this valuation is borne by the local authorities. It is also worthy of note that the £15,000,000 valued by surveyor assessors represent 17,880 square miles, as compared with 11,920 square miles which are represented by the £13,000,000 valued by local assessors.

My Lords, this Bill does not in any way reform the system of rating. It is merely a preliminary, and, as we think, an essential, step to be taken before any question of rating reform can be considered. I think it is unnecessary for me to point out that under the existing system certain inequities do arise, but perhaps I may be allowed to give an instance of what I mean. In some cases land which has enormously benefited by the surrounding improvements effected by the local authorities does not, owing to its valuation, contribute its proper share to the carrying out of those improvements. Let us suppose, for example, that there is an area of unoccupied land in a burgh lying too high for the existing water supply to reach it. We will then suppose that the town council decides to adopt an extensive and costly water scheme, by means of which water will be brought with the reach of this area of land. This land then has enormously benefited, and yet the valuation remains precisely the same, although, as a matter of fact, the land has not contributed as much to the carrying out of the improvements by which it has so greatly benefited as the surrounding property which has not reaped an adequate advantage.

Again, let us take an instance of unoccupied land lying in or adjacent to a burgh. This land is valued at a very small amount and continues year by year to be so valued, although in reality it is steadily increasing in worth. This state of things must tend to such land being held up in the hope, even the certainty, of a larger price being ultimately received for it; and this holding up of land may prove an obstacle in the way of the natural expansion and development of the town. The desire for some reform of the rating system is, I think, generally conceded, and the Agricultural Rating and Relief Act of 1896 shows this desire, as that Act was a temporary measure and has since been renewed.

But before we can consider any question of rating reform we must first of all, in order to be accurately informed on the subject, arrive at the real ground value of the land. The existing system proceeds upon a basis of annual value. The capital value with which this Bill proposes to supplement the valuation roll will show the real ground value of the land, which is not in many cases shown by the annual rental value. Let us for a moment look at the definition upon which the present system of valuation rests. It is as follows—

> "In estimating the yearly value of lands and heritages under this Act, the same shall be taken to be the rent at which one year with another such lands and heritages might, in their actual state, be reasonably expected to let from year to year."

Now it is quite possible that the actual state of the land may not represent its true value. For example, land lying near a town might be worth for feuing from £20 to £30 an acre, whereas it is entered year after year in the valuation roll as worth £2 an acre—that is, as agricultural land. The object then of this Bill is to ascertain the capital value —the real ground value of the land.

Your Lordships may have noticed that railways and canals have been omitted from the present Bill. These two classes of property are, under existing circumstances, treated differently and by a different machinery from other property. Their valuation is based roughly speaking, upon profit, and the rating is cut up and distributed among the different rating districts through which the railway or canal passes. As these undertakings are continuous and pass from one rating district to another, it is clear that a separate machinery is necessary for valuing them; and it has been thought unnecessary and even inapposite to depart from existing usage in the case of the present Bill.

I now come to the question of expense under the Bill. A great deal has been said on this point, and the most widely divergent views have been expressed with regard to it. I should like, therefore, with your Lordships permission, to say a few words about this question of expense. Your Lordships will remember that of the £28,000,000 of valuation to which this Bill applies, £15,000,000 are valued by surveyor assessors, and that the cost of these valuations is defrayed by the Exchequer. The same will apply under the Bill. We have, therefore, only to deal with the £13,000,00 of valuation which remain to be valued by the local assessors. Of this £13,000,000, £8,000,000 are represented by the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow; and the assessor of Glasgow estimates the cost of ascertaining the capital value under this Bill in his city at from £6,000 to £8,000 in the first year. The assessor of Edinburgh, it is understood, estimates the cost for his city at about £2,500. We have thus an estimate of from £8,500 to £10,500 for the £8,000,000 represented by the two cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. There remain £5,000,000 out of the £13,000,000, and, with regard to this, the assessor for Argyleshire estimates the cost for that county at £1,433. On the other hand, the assessor for Roxburghshire writes—

> "I should say that, with a local assessor for the county of Roxburgh, the added cost would be: Salary, £120; clerks, £60; journeys and outlays, £40; printing, postages, etc., £50—£270 in all; or, at most £300."

These views are, of course, somewhat divergent; but, at the same time, even if we take the higher estimate, I do not see that the expense is likely to be very great. I cannot help feeling that, after all, these authorities are surely the persons most qualified to judge of the probable expense of this Bill; and as they are the persons who will have to make the valuation, it is surely unlikely that they would largely under-estimate the cost of the Bill and thus lay themselves open to the imputation of ignorance of their own business. Apart from this, a statement with regard to the expense which was likely to fall upon local authorities was made in another place on the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was as follows—

> "If it should be found that such an addition will be made to the duties of those assessors as really to be in a reasonable sense a fair addition to their duties worthy of estimating and worthy of consideration by the Exchequer, the claims by the local authority on which this initial charge for the first year will thus heavily fall will receive fair and favourable consideration from the Exchequer with a view to granting what, in the opinion of the Treasury, is a reasonable subsidy."

It was further pointed out that this subsidy would be a general subsidy and would go on from year to year to meet the exigencies of the case.

Objectors to this Bill have denounced it as unfeasible, and in this connection it has been pointed out that, under existing conditions in Scotland, all that the assessor has to do is to go to a man and ask him what rent he pays. But this does not take into account the land which is not let, and for which, consequently, no rent is paid. Yet no difficulty is found under the existing system in ascertaining the value of the land, and it is worthy of note that where sales have taken place under arbitration, the value of the land has been arrived at without the smallest trouble. I cannot help feeling, my Lords, that if these critics of the Bill are genuine in their objections they should surely vote for it, because if it is unfeasible it will inevitably by its failure prove them to have been right in their contention. But seriously, my Lords, the evidence given before the Commission on Taxation was, I think, sufficiently strong to warrant our not doubting the feasibility of this Bill.

It has also been said that the Bill is useless and an unnecessary expense, unless at the same time some measure of rating reform is introduced. This is, so far, satisfactory, as showing the anxiety of certain opponents of the Bill with regard to the ratepayers of Scotland; but I cannot help feeling that this objection is very difficult to maintain, and I can well imagine the outburst of indignation which would have greeted the Government had they brought in some measure of rating reform without having previously introduced this preliminary Bill. They would have been told that they were rushing into legislation without due care and forethought, and, as I think, rightly so told. Objection has also been taken to the Bill on this ground, that the passing of this measure would imply agreement with subsequent rating proposals. But does any noble Lord seriously believe that, by assisting to pass this Bill, he will bind himself to accept every possible suggestion for rating reform which may be brought forward? Why, if proof were needed that this is not the case it would be furnished by the fact that the Government have explicitly declined to entertain a suggestion which has been made to apply a rating proposal to existing feu duties. No, my Lords. All that the passing of this Bill could possibly imply, would be the willingness of your Lordships to consider the question of rating reform. In conclusion, I should like once more to emphasise this point. This Bill is not a rating Bill. It is merely a preliminary measure to pave the way by giving us additional information for the consideration of the question of rating reform, and as such I ask your Lordships to give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Herschell.*)

*VISCOUNT RIDLEY: My Lords, I rise to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months. This being ostensibly a Scottish Bill concerning Scotland only, I feel that I, as a mere Englishman, am somewhat out of place in moving this Motion, and I may say that when I placed it on the Paper it was merely with the intention of taking part in a debate upon a subject on which I have had opportunities of speaking in another place. I desire to explain to your Lordships that it is not merely on the merits of the Bill as a Scottish Valuation Bill that I move this Motion. On that I shall venture to say a few words later. But there are other grounds.

In the first place, it is well known—it was mentioned in the King's Speech—that this measure is to be followed by a similar proposal for England, and if this House admits the principle for Scotland it will be difficult, if not impossible, to say that it should not be applied to every other part of the United Kingdom. I, therefore, think it is important that your Lordships should take into very early consideration the real principle of this Bill and what it will mean if carried into law. In the second place, the issues involved lie considerably outside the Bill itself. Your Lordships will remember that the same Bill was introduced last year, and that your Lordships were unable at that late period of the session to give it a Second Reading. It was not properly considered last year in either House of Parliament. It was given practically no consideration whatever last year; and when the scene of activity was transferred from Westminster to the country the speeches made by the supporters of the Bill, and the interest, such as it was, that was shown in the measure, were directed to a considerable number of questions which had nothing whatever to do with the Bill itself. In fact, if you study the majority of the orations delivered on public platforms you will find that they took less note of the virtues of the Bill than of the vices of a Second Chamber.

The measure, moreover, has not been practically debated this year in the other House, and, therefore, your Lordships have to consider the Bill almost for the first time on its merits. It has hitherto been used as a battering-ram and nothing else; and I venture to think that if your Lordships were to treat it as a battering-ram, and give it that consideration which is usually extended to a battering-ram by defenders of a fortress, you would be perfectly justified. But I do not ask your Lordships to reject it on those grounds. I ask you to consider it on its merits, and on its merits to pronounce it a bad and impossible Bill. We are asked to pass a Bill which deals with a new system of rating before we are told what that new system of rating is to be. I submit that that is a premature thing to ask us to do. It is totally unnecessary to upset the whole system of valuation in Scotland or anywhere else without due cause shown, and, until we are shown that a workable system of rating on the basis of the capital valuation of land can be made part of our rating system, I submit that it is premature to introduce a Bill which, while causing considerable expense and difficulty makes a great innovation on the system which has been in force for a great many years. You are producing the arms and legs of a new system of valuation without the body. Who cares what the valuation is except in regard to the taxation which is to be founded upon it?

The noble Lord who introduced this Bill tells us that if we object to the system which is to be founded upon it we can express our objections at a later stage. I venture to submit that when the noble Lord at a later stage is concerned in pressing upon this Assembly the legislation founded upon this Bill we shall be told that it is a money Bill to which we can have nothing to say. I therefore ask this House at this stage to take the procedure of saying that the legislation which confessedly is intended to be founded on this Bill is bad in principle and should be stopped at the very outset. I need not quote the declarations of the Government on the point. They began by telling us it was a mere valuation Bill and had nothing to do with anything else. But now we have it from the noble Lord—and it was stated last year from the Woolsack—that this Bill is intended to be followed by further legislation. The legislation which is to be founded on this Bill must be, and can only be, in the direction of imposing some taxation on ground values on the basis of the capital valuation of those ground values; and it is material to point out that whatever the Government may say—and I fully acknowledge that responsible speakers on behalf of the Government have disavowed all responsibility as far as they themselves are concerned for the doctrines of Henry George—those doctrines are the driving power behind this Bill, doctrines which aim at the complete confiscation of the land values of this country. That proposition does not need proof. Behind this Bill is the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, and the real support that the Bill gets is from gentlemen who think it would be to the advantage of this country to tax all land values out of existence. If it were necessary to prove that, I have here a letter written by an English Member of Parliament, Mr. Wedgwood, to *The Times*, in which he seeks to prove the advantages which would follow from the transfer of taxation from land and buildings combined, on to land only, and that letter could be matched again and again.

The object of the chief supporters of this Bill is to put the whole rate upon land values alone. Let me give an instance of what would probably happen. It is almost the only instance upon which an argument can be fairly founded. It is very difficult to find out what proportion of the rateable value is really paid by the land, but we have approximately, in the case of the County of London, the annual rateable value of land alone. I can give for the last quinquennial assessment, in 1906, what the London County Council estimated to be the annual rateable value of land values alone. The estimate of the annual rateable value of the land in London in 1906 was £18,000,000. The rateable value in the same year was £43,000,000; so that of the annual rateable value in 1906, the year of the last quinquennial assessment, land was estimated in the county of London to be £18,000,000 out of £43,000,000, or 40 per cent. of the rateable value. Now the argument I wish to found upon that is that 40 per cent. roughly represents the average incidence of the rates. It is somewhere between 33 per cent. and 50 per cent., but 40 per cent. is near enough. Forty per cent. is the annual incidence of the rates, and, therefore, if the whole burden of the rates is thrown on land, you will need a rate of 20s. in the £ in London, and there is every reason to suppose that practically a similar state of affairs would be disclosed all over the country. Therefore, if the avowed object of the chief supporters of this Bill is carried out in anything like its entirety you will have a rate of 20s. in the £ on land values in this country.

I do not propose to carry this House into a detailed discussion of what the precise effect of a rate of 20s. in the £ would be on land. I leave your Lordships to figure it out yourselves; but when we have a Bill introduced which is confessedly meant to be followed by legislation, somewhat of that character, when we have a large number of the supporters of the Bill advocating legislation entirely of that character, then I do say we are entitled to ask the Government, before we allow this Bill to pass, to give us an indication of what they really mean to found upon it. I do not believe that any amount of questioning will elicit from the Government what their real intentions are; but, whatever they mean to do, I believe they will find that they will come against the difficulty that land reformers constantly come against. However reformers may desire to change the incidence of rates, however much there may be of sympathetic support in the attempt to get out of men who enjoy very large rents in populous places some portion of the wealth which they derive from what has been termed unearned increment—however much sympathy there may be in that, land reformers invariably come against the difficulty which the Government will experience, of how they are to get any of that increased value without doing irreparable injustice to the large class of small investors, and even to the large investors who have recently bought property, who are consequently in a different position from those who have inherited property which has been in the family for many years, and who, perhaps, may be said to enjoy, in truth, unearned increment. It is not unearned increment when you have bought it within the last year or two on the expectation of a large rent and paid a capital value which corresponds to that large rent. The Government will find that difficulty.

Let me give an illustration of how great that difficulty will be from an incident in the early history of land rating. John Stuart Mill was an advocate for the taxation of the unearned increment—I believe he was the originator of the phrase "unearned increment"—and he had a scheme for appropriating unearned increment for the benefit of the State. But, my Lords, what did he propose? He proposed in 1870 to take for the benefit of the State all the unearned increment that should accrue for the future, but in order to do that with perfect justice to existing proprietors he proposed that the land of the country should all be valued at once, and that the taxation should be founded on the additional value that should come to that land in future years; but that at any time during the future any landowner should have the right of selling his land to the State at the prices of 1870. Had that been carried into effect the State would now be the owner of very large tracts of country bought at 1870 prices, which would to-day be a dead loss to the country. There is an unearned decrement as well as an unearned increment, and the same difficulty which faced John Stuart Mill when he attempted to deal justly with the question will face any Government that attempts to deal with it.

It is true that His Majesty's Government during recent years have been graduating in the school of pocket-picking, and we are getting accustomed to legislation which attempts to take from private persons the legitimate profits of their industry; but I hesitate to believe that they really mean to found unjust legislation upon this Bill. They may be graduating in the school of Fagin, but I do not think they have reached the skill of the Artful Dodger; they are more likely, like Oliver Twist, to run away from their schoolmaster. Therefore I say that when they introduce the Bill founded on this measure they will find it difficult to deal fairly with the existing owners of land.

On what theory of local taxation is this Bill founded? Hitherto we have had our local taxation founded, practically speaking, on two theories—either in respect of benefits received or in respect of ability to pay. I cannot see that this Bill is founded upon either theory. Its chief effect will be to get at what is called unoccupied land, vacant spaces, land that is held up. But vacant land is precisely the class of land which receives less benefit from the rates than any other class. What benefit does vacant land derive from the police rate, the education rate, or the poor rate? Unoccupied land, which is proposed to be valued under this Bill for the purpose of taxation, derives no benefit from a large portion of the rates; yet it will be very largely taxed. Nor is the Bill founded upon the theory of ability to pay. Will your Lordships imagine two contiguous properties—a mansion and a farm of equal area. It is obvious that the man who can afford to occupy a mansion is better able to pay rates than the man who merely occupies a small farm. Yet under this Bill the man who occupies the mansion and the occupier of the small farm adjoining will pay the same rates. The Bill, therefore, is not founded on any of the principles which have hitherto governed our rating system. Nor has the valuation system proposed any relation whatever to our previous system. Up to the present time, except for the purpose of the death duty, annual value has been the regular basis of the valuation of property in this country, and I see no reason whatever for departing from it. For the death duties, it is true, we value the capital value, but we value personalty and realty also, and both fall under the same category. In the State of New York, where a similar system of capital valuing prevails, there also every kind of property fall under the same category. But here the proposal is to extend to land, and to land only, an unfair system of capital valuation.

I submit that, whatever the noble Lord who introduced the Bill may say, it will be practically impossible to carry out the Bill, and I see no reason why the community should be put to the risk and danger of attempting to carry it out. Of course, in one sense a valuation can be made. It is obviously possible to place some value on a property; the question is whether the land of this country could be valued satisfactorily on the basis of capital value; and I submit that the testimony of those who have been consulted by the various Commissions and Committees which have sat on this question is so very discrepant as to afford no indication whatever as to what is likely to happen.

When the noble Lord, in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, asked us to accept as final and conlcusive the evidence of the gentlemen who will be entrusted with the task of valuing the various properties, I think he showed a somewhat confiding nature. I do not desire to impute any interested motives whatever to the class of valuer who will be engaged under this Bill, but it is perfectly clear to me that if we want a testimony which we can accept as final we should not go only to the gentleman who will be paid for carrying out the Bill. Nothing has been said as to the expense to which a private person would be put if he disputed the valuation. The cost thrown upon the community in a personal capacity, apart from what they will have to pay as ratepayers and taxpayers, will be very large; and I submit that it is quite unnecessary to harass them in that way. Nor are we told in this Bill, although the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made certain conditional promises in another place, anything about the taxpayer bearing any portion of the expense. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated explicitly that he will consider the question of subsidising various districts, if it is found to be wanted, but no indication of this intention is to be found in the Bill. As the Bill stands there is cast upon the ratepayer what may be an enormous cost.

In order to show how difficult it will be to make this valuation, let me quote the effective words of the Bill. Clause 3 provides that—

> "'Capital land value' in reference to any lands and heritages includes the value of any common interest in land, and means the sum which such lands and heritages or common interest might be expected to realise if sold by a willing seller in the open market at the time of the valuation if (1) divested of buildings, erections or improvements, of whatever nature, on, in, or under the soil, woods, fixed or attached machinery, and work of drainage and of reclamation, making up, levelling, and the like, where the benefit thereof is unexhausted at the time of valuation; and (2) sold free from all burdens, public and private, except building restrictions or servitudes: Provided that where the assessor considers that any restriction or servitude created after the passing of this Act has been created in order to defeat this Act it shall be lawful for him (without prejudice to the appeal to which any person aggrieved is entitled) to disregard such restriction or servitude."

Picture to yourselves what the valuer will have to do. I do not say he cannot do it. A valuer will value anything. But picture to yourselves the process, and ask yourselves if it can be a satisfactory or uniform one throughout the kingdom. The valuer will take that clause. He will go to one house and picture to himself that house gone. The land is to be divested of buildings, erections, or improvements; and he will value the site without the house. For the purpose of his valuation of that particular site he will have to leave the land on the side of it with the house standing and perhaps with the house standing on the other side; and when the valuer has finished the valuation of the first site, he will have to go next door, and, in his imagination, build up the first house while pulling down the second, and so on down street after street of our great towns. He has to value it divested of buildings, erections, or improvements, of whatever nature, on, in, or under the soil, and works of drainage and reclamation. According to the strict terms of Clause 3, when he has done this the land is left really without even agricultural value. I cannot see how it is possible for even the most imaginative of men to carry out strictly the requirements of this Bill. It cannot be done. It seems to me that the only guide which a valuer has is the price which can be got for an article. Professional valuing, as I understand it, is not a profession which requires a sort of intuitive genius or any very particular training. It requires a long experience of finding what land can sell for, but that is precisely the experience you are going to deny to valuers under this Bill.

Having tried to show that the Bill is, in the first place, premature, in the second place unfair, and in the third place impracticable, I desire before I sit down to touch briefly on two sentimental considerations which seem to have great weight with the supporters of this Bill. It is imagined that the Bill will prevent overcrowding by compelling landowners to put their land to the best use. I do not deny that there may be cases where land is held up; but I believe that these are rare, and that it is a mistake to suppose that land is held up in any large quantities. I would, however, mention one case. The Glasgow Corporation have been, I believe, most enthusiastic in support of the Bill. According to a return just granted, they have 300,000 square yards of land fit for building on, which is entered at a valuation of £600,000 and in one particular district they are holding up land at the price of £9,000 an acre. This is a price which it is obvious that no builder could afford to pay for speculative purposes. Here is a case of holding up land in its most aggravated form which is practised by the very corporation which is most forward in attacking private owners on that ground. I question whether the best use that land can be put to is to cover it with jerry-built houses. May it not sometimes be better to leave it open for the benefit of the lungs of a town?

If this Bill is meant as a remedy for overcrowding, I would point out that in Paris and New York, where the system of taxing the capital value of land is in force, overcrowding of a worse description than anything in this country is to be found. The first effect of the Bill would certainly be to lessen the taxation borne by factories and breweries in country districts and increase the amount that has to be paid by the agricultural community, who can least afford it. I ask your Lordships to reject the Bill because I believe it to be unfair, incomplete, and impracticable, and that no amount of amendment or modification could affect the principle of the Bill. It is founded not on any principle which has hitherto guided the rating system of this country but on a system suggested by the Scottish Taxation of Land Values Association and other Henry Georgeite societies. It is begotten by fanatical societies out of an ignorant Government; it stands allied with another Bill equally unsound and vicious, which your Lordships rejected a fortnight ago, and I ask the House not to allow the two Bills to be divided in death.

Amendment moved—

"To leave out the word 'now' in order to insert the words 'this day six months.'"—(*Viscount Ridley.*)

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: My Lords, two very different views of this measure have been put before your Lordships. The first was that of the noble Lord who, in an interesting speech, asked your Lordships to agree to the Second Reading. He minimised the importance of the Bill, treating it as merely preliminary to some measure of rating reform, of which he did not suggest the contents, or on what principles that measure should be based. He practically repeated the words of the Lord Advocate to the effect that it was merely the insertion of an additional column in the valuation roll for the purpose of obtaining information and would do no harm to anybody so far as any fresh rating or taxation was concerned.

But both the noble Lord and the Lord Advocate did not sufficiently allow for the expenses which will be inflicted first on the owners of the property, who will have great trouble in assessing their own land as required; and secondly, upon the taxpayer, who, I think, will have to bear a good deal more than the very moderate expenditure suggested by the noble Lord opposite. I can quite understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a natural predilection for Scotland in imposing charges upon the Exchequer, but, even so, I think the estimates are extremely low and are likely to be very greatly exceeded. But that, after all, is a minor point. The general view of the Bill taken by the noble Lord was that of a very harmless, unimportant amendment of the technical and dry details of the law relating to valuation in Scotland.

My noble friend who has just sat down, in his able speech, dealt with the measure from a very different point of view. It is evident he had in his mind a very much more important matter than anything dealt with by this Bill—the possible adoption by Parliament, or, at any rate, by this Government, of some wild proposal for a change in the incidence of rates and income-tax put forward by the bodies to which he alluded, and supported by a very active and noisy party among the supporters of the Government, who have been, I am afraid, encouraged by the speeches of one, if not both, of the Scottish law officers of the Crown. I wish to examine the measure, in the first place, as a proposal for dealing with the particular grievance to which the noble Lord who introduced it referred.

What is the grievance with which it is intended to deal? In the first place, I would ask your Lordships to bear in mind that, as it appeared from the speech of the noble Lord, it is purely an urban grievance. He put two cases, and only two. He put the case of land on high ground which did not get the benefit of a town water supply. The town then decided to expend large sums on a new water supply through which they could benefit the land on the high ground, and he said that in such a case the land, though benefited, would not fairly contribute towards the cost of the water supply. If it did not, I admit that there may be some reason for altering the law of assessment, but I think it would, certainly directly there were buildings on that land and buildings would be rendered possible by the existence of the water supply. Those buildings would at once be rated for the town expenditure, and the people in them would bear, in one shape or another, the cost of the water supply. Then the noble Lord put the case of unoccupied land in or near a burgh—the word "near" I think was a little vague—which was held up for future building purposes, which, he said, according to the present law was rated only on its value as agricultural land, although it could be immediately utilised for building. If such a case exists, I think it would be possible to deal with it without going the length of the Bill before us.

What is the proposal under this Bill? My noble friend and the noble Lord who introduced it have referred to the basis of the system of annual valuation for rating and taxation in Scotland. That basis is, I think, identical at present with the English basis. It is the annual value or rent which may accrue to the owner, the owner and the tenant respectively undertaking to bear certain liabilities with regard to the property. The definitions are not, I think, quite identical in England and in Scotland. I think in England the Assessment Committee has rather more latitude than the Scottish assessor, because the Assessment Committee might, if they thought the rent was either too high or too low as representing the real annual value of the hereditament, lower or increase the gross estimated rental so as to make it properly correspond to the words of the law.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: And so can the Scottish assessor.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: I do not know how that may be, but that is the case, I think, in England. What does this Bill propose? As my noble friend behind me has stated, it departs for the first time, and for one kind of hereditament alone, that of land, from the system of assessment according to annual value. If it merely did that to this extent, that it provided for an assessment on capital value which should be calculated according to so many years' purchase of the annual value, the difference would not be important, though I should not see any particular reason for making the change. But it does much more. What it does is to invent a definition of capital value such as I do not think has been heard of in English or Scottish local taxation. The definition in the Bill is—

> "'Capital land value' in reference to any lands and heritages includes the value of any common interest in land, and means the sum which such lands and heritages or common interest might be expected to realise if sold by a willing seller in the open market at the time of the valuation,"

divested of buildings, erections, or improvements, where the benefit thereof is unexhausted at the time of valuation, and sold free from all public burdens. The noble Lord who introduced the Bill said that that was a very easy thing to discover; that they found no difficulty now under the system of annual value in deducing what would be the fair rent for an unlet tenement from the rent of a tenement of a similar kind which is actually let. He further said that you will be able to deduce, in the same way, the capital value of one property which has not been sold from the capital value of a similar property which has lately been sold in the market. The noble Lord entirely forgot that no property, except, perhaps, a tract of mountain or down land, or a piece of land which had been set aside for building and had for a time been allowed to become waste, is ever sold on the unimproved basis referred to in this Bill. When a man wishes to buy a house, with or without a garden, he does not in considering the purchase, separate the land value from the value of the building on it. He considers what he will give for the whole hereditament. That is the way that almost all such property is bought and sold. The same with a farm. Whoever thought, in considering the purchase of a farm, what the value of the land of that farm was without any houses or building or or cottages, or roads or hedges or drains any other improvements? I venture to say that any such calculation would, where the land is poor, very often lead the intending purchaser to this, that he would find, supposing the land in that unimproved condition, that it would cost him so much to supply the farm with all the equipment necessary to cultivate it, that the land by itself would hardly be worth anything at all. The idea that an assessor or an owner would find it easy to estimate the capital value of land on this basis is, I think, a delusion. I do not understand, either, why the estimate should be as if the land were free from all public burdens. I am afraid I know of no land which is free from public burdens either in Scotland or England, and, therefore, it could not be sold unless it were subject to public burdens. Then, again, you do not deal with all land, for the noble Lord opposite said that land occupied by railways and canals would be exempt from this assessment, though I think there must be some other reason than the one he gave, which has not yet been communicated to us, why such land should not be included in the assessment.

But there is something more important than this. I have said that the basis of our rating system is annual value, which means, practically, the income the owner derives, or might derive, from his property, if he utilises it to the best advantage. The Bill proposes, by its definition of capital value, to assess something which has never yet been the subject of local or Imperial annual taxation. It proposes to assess the prospective value of land. What would be the effect of the valuation proposed in this Bill? The prospect is simply unlimited and indefinite. It is all left, practically, to be guessed by the assessor. An assessor of a vivid imagination and a sanguine temperament may see in an estate some distance from a town a prospective building value fifty years hence which nobody else could imagine. Or he may see the possibility of a naval dockyard on a barren shore, or he may have a great idea of the possibilities of mineral development—possibilities even more remote than those of the Kentish coalfield—and according to these ideas he may assess the land value at something far beyond anything that the owner could possibly realise and something which does not come into his pocket at the moment.

That is the essence of the whole thing. If it is right to assess the owner of land to annual taxation on something which he does not actually derive from his property and which he may never derive from his property, I will venture to say that you cannot stop at land. You will have to extend the principle to other classes of property as well. Why should not you assess to such taxation, as you do assess to the death duties, pictures, or plate, or jewels or furniture, or anything which a man has which does not yield any present income to the owner, on the very same basis of capital value as you propose to assess his land ?

The only reason I can suggest is this, and I should be very sorry to suggest it as the reason that influences His Majesty's Government, because I do not think they share the theories to which I am about to allude. But there are active persons who do hold the theory that land should be nationalised, and who are trying all they can to promote that result. Their idea is that a first step in that should be the placing of all local taxation on the basis of land values. My noble friend has dwelt on the effect this would have upon the present owners of land. I cannot believe for a moment that this view is really the view of His Majesty's Government, but I have been told that it is the view which has been advanced by the law officers of the Crown for Scotland, and that they have actually said that it is their intention, in a rating Bill which is to follow this measure, to impose on the owners of capital land value all the rates now leviable on the composite value of buildings and land. And they have defended this proposal on the ground that the change would result in liberating improvements from the increased taxation to which they are now subject, owing to the increased value which they confer on the hereditament, and that, therefore, it would be an incentive to owners to improve their land, that it would force unoccupied land into the market, and be some solution of the great housing problem. When that proposition was suggested in the debate in this House last year, the Lord Chancellor, I think, spoke of any such alteration of taxation as ridiculous.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR nodded assent.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN : I am very glad to see that I have correctly quoted the noble and learned Lord. What is the most important matter, to my mind, in connection with this Bill is that your Lordships should have the most distinct declarations from the Members of the Cabinet in this House, who can speak with an authority which is not given to their satellites, the Scottish law officers, that His Majesty's Government do not intend to introduce into the rating Bill for Scotland that they contemplate, any proposition of that kind. If no such assurance is forthcoming, then I think your Lordships would have no choice but to reject this Bill as a mere first step to what would practically be confiscation and robbery. Of course, if we had such an assurance we might be able to consider it in Committee. Then the points to which I have alluded would arise in a manner which would, at any rate, enable His Majesty's Government, if they can justify the particular machinery proposed by this Bill, to justify it in a shape which would be easier to criticise and to answer than could possibly be the case in a debate on the Second Reading.

I feel, as an old House of Commons man, that any question of the basis of rating is cognate to those questions of taxation which are peculiarly the province of the House of Commons. Therefore I should be very sorry that your Lordships should reject the Second Reading of the Bill, which we have sufficient time this year to consider. Those most opposed in principle to the imposition of all rates on land values would profit most by discussions in Committee, and we might be able to introduce important Amendments which would put our case before the country in a way which would be impossible if we rejected the Second Reading.

Take, for example, the extent to which this Bill is to be applied. As it stands it is applicable to the whole of Scotland. Why ? Is there any demand for it, is there any necessity for it throughout the whole of Scotland ? No such demand or necessity has been even suggested. Is it necessary that it should be compulsory upon the local authorities ? No doubt Glasgow and other burghs are very much in favour of some change of the kind as a remedy for their grievances. But I saw the other day that the Town Council of Edinburgh, by a large majority, declined to have anything to do with the Bill. Why are you to enforce on an unwilling community, even at the cost of the Exchequer, this experiment which they might be very willing to see tried by others, but which they do not wish to apply to themselves?

These matters can be fairly considered in Committee; and I think that to reject this Bill without endeavouring to have the whole case of the Government stated in reply to Amendments, and to ascertain precisely what are the grievances and by what changes they may be remedied, would be a mistake which, I hope, the House will not commit. Therefore, although I feel as strongly as my noble friend about the policy of confiscation to which he referred and which some observations of the law officers might seem to foreshadow, I hope we may have such explanations and assurances from the Government as to their intentions in a matter of far more importance than this Bill—namely, the rating Bill, of which it is the preliminary—as will justify us in giving a Second Reading to this measure.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, my noble friend Lord Herschell, who introduced this Bill in a speech to which I think the House listened with very great pleasure, has not only relieved me from the labour of expounding the contents of the Bill, but he said one thing which is eminently true. This Bill is not a rating Bill at all. But it is a preliminary to any effective measure by which the rating system is to be amended. Therefore it ought to be judged by itself. At the same time, I am neither surprised nor sorry that the debate should have travelled also into the question of rating, because, although without the information which this valuation, I hope, will give us and without very mature consideration, it is not possible to announce beforehand the contents of some future Bill, I see no reason at any time why the general principles on which rating or taxation are to be settled should not be freely discussed; and I have no intention of observing any reserve on the subject.

The main part of the speech of the noble Viscount who moved the rejection of this Bill assumed that His Majesty's Government intended to take part in some scheme which he very easily demonstrated to be a scheme of confiscation and dishonesty; and, having assumed that premiss, the noble Viscount had no difficulty in carrying it to its legitimate conclusion of vigorous denunciation of ourselves. He compared us to pickpockets and to Fagin. I thought that in a little questionable taste.

VISCOUNT RIDLEY: I said you were graduating in the school of Fagin.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: But what is the proposal which the noble Viscount thinks we are in peril of entertaining? It is that the basis of rating should be so altered that, whereas the present rates are assessed on the composite subject of land and buildings, in future it should be assessed on land alone. The noble Viscount was right in saying that such a proposal was impracticable. As an illustration of it, he told us that the total rateable value of London is now £43,000,000, that the portion which is appropriated to site values is £18,000,000, and that the rates are £18,000,000. I believe that those figures are accurate; and the conclusion is irresistible. If you put the rates on the land value alone, it would destroy the land value altogether; in other words, it would eat it up. But the noble Viscount did not give us credit for penetration enough to perceive that fact, or for honesty enough to avoid accomplishing it.

The noble Viscount has tasted but not drunk deep of the Pierian spring. There are other objections that he does not suspect. One is that, if you impose on land values the entire rates, you would create a state of affairs in which the occupiers would strike the rate and the owners would pay it; and you would be relieving the rich at the expense of the poor; because a large suburban house with valuable land, which now pays on the composite value, would then pay only on the prairie value of the land, while the shopkeeper in the next street would have to pay £50 or £60 a year. Surely the noble Viscount might suppose that we see these things; and I do not think that it is quite charitable to assume of us, who are responsible for the government of the country, that we are unable to see or unwilling to prevent, as far as we can, such nonsense as that. But that was the whole basis of the noble Viscount's speech, and he is frank enough to admit that that was the substance of his objection to the Bill. There is not a word in this Bill which gives the least sanction or countenance to anything of the kind.

To dispose of that argument is easy, but it does not dispose of the subject; nor is it possible that persons should come to extravagant views of that kind unless there were a real grievance in connection with the rating or, rather, the non-rating, of land values—a grievance which requires to be remedied. Let me present my view of this really intricate subject. There has been for a considerable time in this country a great movement of population from the country districts to the crowded centres; and now four-fifths of the inhabitants of this country live in the towns. Alongside of the movement of the population towards the centres the rates in the central districts have increased. Does the the House appreciate the extent to which they have increased, or how dangerous and serious that constant increase is?

I will compare the two years 1899 and 1904. In 1899 the rates in England and Wales were £38,000,000, and in 1904 they were £52,000,000. The increase of assessable value in England and Wales in this period of five years was from £159,000,000 to £182,000,000. An increase of the rates to the extent of two-thirds kept pace with the increase in the assessable value. The loans outstanding for non-productive undertakings in England and Wales for these five years rose from £151,000,000 to £206,000,000. Those are appalling figures. The rates increased from 4s. 9d. to 5s. 9d. in the £; and in the towns the rates averaged something like 8s. in the £. There are towns in England and Wales in which they are even higher, reaching to 10s. and 11s., and in one case even to 12s. in the £. With these high rates have come also high land values, and the rates tend to increase the land values. The cause of the two is the same—namely, the concentration of the people in small areas.

The thing has come to this—that in London, and, I believe, also in other great cities, it has become impracticable to house the poor people at economic rents at all. There was a Royal Commission on Traffic upon which I served, and the Report of which enters into these things. The Commissioners said that certain propositions were clearly established. One was that the price of land in the central districts in London makes it impossible to re-house the working classes within these districts at rents which they can afford to pay without a heavy loss to those who undertake the re-housing schemes. I will give an illustration. It is the Holborn to Strand improvement, which took place a few years ago. In connection with that the County Council were obliged to buy land for re-housing. They bought an estate for £201,000, and they were obliged to write this sum down to £44,000. This value was ear-marked for artisan housing, and they debited the balance to street improvements. The consequence was that they accommodated 2,640 persons at a cost of £60 per head to the rates. Your Lordships will appreciate what the meaning is of high land value in London. It means that the rents are largely paid out of the rates. The Commissioners say—

> "The evidence before us proves that it is impracticable to re-house the working classes in the central districts at economic rents."

Here you put your finger on the source of that to which reference has been made by the noble Viscount—namely, the question of overcrowding. Overcrowding is simply caused because land values are so high that the rents become necessarily high, though the land is not fully made use of for commercial purposes, and the people cannot afford to pay these rents. They are thus driven into these hovels and wretched slums from which so many evil consequences arise. On one side you have the population being swept up from the country to London; on the other side, you have these great land values confronting them there and driving them into the slums. There is no question whatever that this is one of the chief causes of this overcrowding evil. Reference has been made to the Bill which was rejected, I am sorry to say, by your Lordships about a fortnight ago, and with regard to which I indicated that I would try to meet you. It is one way, and only one way, of trying to meet some portion of this difficulty. This Bill touches another side of this same question. Of course, I shall be told, as I was then, that the Bill then submitted was not a remedy. No; it was not, and it may be said that the Bill now before you is not a remedy. I agree that it is not, for it only touches a portion of the evil. The mischief itself is many sided and the remedy accordingly has to be many sided.

When the rates are pressing so hardly, as they are, on the population of the great cities, the first instinct of every one will be to try to bring in some fresh source of taxation, as, for example, personal property. I was surprised to hear the noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn, speak of that as something of a predatory kind. But for 200 years after the statute of Elizabeth it was the practice in this country—intermittent, I admit—to subject stock-in-trade to rating, as well as pictures, and so forth. Lord Mansfield always resisted it, and it was only about sixty years ago that an Act which is passed annually in Parliament put an end to the rating of personal property. It was found to be impracticable to rate personal property for the reason that you were not able to localise it so as to say, for example, that this piece of goods belongs to the parish of Holborn and should be taxed there. Some other method, therefore, must be adopted. The rating must be confined to real property, though it was difficult to lay all rating on the real value of real property.

There was a Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1885, against whose character for integrity I have never heard any accusation made. There were three dissentients, but the majority of the Commission pointed out the fact that by reason of the annual value being the standard on which rates were based, it presupposes that you must value according to the use actually made of the land at the time, and not the value of the land. A man, say, has a great property which is not under building. Although it is of very great value, it pays rates on the footing of its being agricultural land, whereas the neighbour of this proprietor, with a much smaller property, and of much less value—perhaps one-tenth of its value—pays three or four times more rates. That is an anomaly which has been pointed out by the Royal Commission. The Commissioners said that at at present land available for building in populous centres, though its capital value is very great, is probably producing a small yearly return, until let for building. The owners are rated, not in relation to the real value, but on the actual annual income. The Commissioners proceed—

> "If this land were rated at, say, 4 per cent. on its selling value, the owners would have a more direct incentive to part with it to those who are desirous of building, and a twofold advantage would result to the community."

With admirable brevity the Royal Commissioners state, in two sentences, what the two-fold advantage is. They say—

> "First, all available property would contribute to the rates and thus the burden on the occupiers would be diminished by the increase in the rateable property; next, the owner of the building land would be forced to offer the land for sale, and thus competition one with another would bring down the price of the building land, and so diminish the tax in the shape of ground rent or price paid for land now levied on urban enterprise by the adjacent landowner—a tax, be it remembered, which is no recompense for any industry or enterprise on their part, but is the natural result of the energy and activity of the townspeople themselves."

Accordingly these Royal Commissioners in whose footsteps I humbly tread, with three dissentients recommended a tax of this kind. And will your Lordships be pleased to observe it was a tax upon capital value. It was not a tax upon the annual value at all. The point of it was that it was on the capital value, because if you put it on the annual value you restrict the assessment to the actual use of the land which probably may be let out from year to year.

I draw attention to another Report, which is a minority Report, signed by Lord Balfour and other Commissioners only a few years ago, dealing with local taxation. It proceeds on different lines. When you spend money on improvements, in a certain sense you benefit the whole town, but you specially benefit the site values by all improvements. The improvement of a street does not make a house more comfortable, but the land on which it is built is made more valuable, because, if the property is put along a fine street, it would let better than before. I will give two illustrations which will show that Parliament has recognised the truth of these propositions. and has given effect to them in Acts of Parliament. In the case of the Tower Bridge improvement there were certain clauses known as the "betterment clauses," by which a special rate was authorised in respect of certain lands near the Tower which were to be improved, and which were made more valuable by the improvement itself. Similar clauses found their way into other London Acts, and certainly in a Manchester Act. The equity of the principle is so obvious that no one nowadays objects to it. But there was another method adopted in the case of the Holborn and Strand improvement. Instead of utilising the betterment clauses, which were in rather a crude form at that time, power was given to take belts of land alongside the projected street although they were not necessary for the construction of the street, in order that the local authority might compulsorily buy these strips at their value before the improvement, and so realise the profit which would arise after the improvement had been effected.

The minority Report, signed by such names as those of Lord Balfour, Sir E. Hamilton, Lord Kinross, and Sir George Murray, is a most interesting and valuable Report, full of suggestions, full of common sense. That Report generalises in effect to my mind the principles to which I have adverted, and proposes that all urban rateable property should be taxed alike for such purposes as poor relief, police, and so forth, and that expenditure on improvements beneficial to site value should be defrayed by a special charge proportioned to the site value alone.

My Lords, I admit the full difficulty of the question There is, I know, room for difference of opinion. I am aware that economists of a very high order of skill and experience do differ in opinion upon it, but let no man imagine that you can dispose of a question of this kind by trotting forth the old worn-out fallacies propounded in the early days of Henry George and endeavouring to fix the Government with proposals with which they have no sympathy whatever, while ignoring the real facts and difficulties as well as the suggested remedies. What we have to do is to address ourselves to the immense economic difficulties that underlie these problems, and that is what we have to do when we come to the question of rating.

But now the noble Viscount wishes to shut the door, and says that we are not even to enter into the consideration of that, that we are not to have even the preliminary valuation that alone will enable us to bring forward proposals for the purpose of meeting the difficulty. Your Lordships will have plenty of opportunity, if the proposals are such as the noble Viscount adumbrated, of throwing out the Bill when the proposals are made. It is a money Bill we are told. Well, if a money Bill is brought forward this House has always the power to throw it out. It is the question of amending money Bills that is a question of privilege, but as to the question of throwing out money Bills your Lordships have the most ample powers. If you think the proposals, when they are brought forward, are dishonest proposals, you have the most ample power to say they are dishonest and to throw them out. But to throw out this preliminary measure, without which you cannot enter one step upon this most thorny and at the same time most vital question, would be very unwise.

I must observe in regard to the last Report to which I referred that it is quite true it refers simply to urban land and did not commit those who signed it to an opinion at all in favour of capital valuation. I quite agree, I shall be prepared to meet my critics on both these points when we come to them in Committee, and I shall be prepared to give reasons why it should not be confined to urban land, and why it should be extended to capital value. But in the principle I think I have fairly stated the point of the minority Report, and I say it justifies and, indeed, demands that a Bill of this kind should be read a second time, and that we should be able to discuss it. Site value must be valued in one way or another if any of these proposals are to be carried. Can it be done? asks one noble Earl. I am told it is habitually and constantly done in the ordinary valuation of Scotland. It is done in Glasgow, in New York, and in Paris, but not to a very great extent. Now, my Lords, I have stated, not indeed the contents of the Bill which may hereafter be introduced into Parliament—I hope it will—but the principles that I think are applicable to the subject, and I sincerely hope that this Bill will not share the fate of its twin—a twin equally deserving, in my humble opinion—which perished at your Lordships' hands.

EARL ROSEBERY: May I, by the courtesy of the noble and learned Lord, ask him one question? Why is it that all his figures and examples refer to England alone, while the Bill refers to Scotland alone?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Because the figures and examples that are available, relate almost entirely, I think, to London, and I am not aware of any similar figures that are available in regard to Scotland. If the noble Earl will be so kind as to furnish me with such figures I will in future amend my ways and quote Scottish figures. But there is absolutely no difference in the principle of land valuation, which is the same in both countries.

EARL ROSEBERY: Yes, but do not the figures and examples make an almost admirable case for bringing in a Bill for London or England, but none whatever for bringing in a Bill for Scotland?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I think they do make a good case for England, and we shall bring in a Bill for England.

A NOBLE LORD: When?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: We really cannot do everything at once. But will the noble Earl permit me to say that his statement that the figures and examples do not furnish a good foundation for a Bill for Scotland is, with all respect to him, completely erroneous? The principle is the same, overcrowding is the same, the increase of rent is the same, the increase of value is the same. All are the same, *mutatis mutandis*.

EARL ROSEBERY: What we cannot understand is why all these experiments are to be tried on Scotland when the whole ground-work of the noble and learned Lord's speech was laid in England, and the whole infliction—or, shall I say, the whole benefit—is confined to Scotland.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, I hope your Lordships will allow me even at this hour, when many may desire to go, to say a few words in answer to the speech of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. I think I can undertake to be really brief upon this occasion, because, so far as my sympathies go, I concur to this extent with the noble Viscount on the Front Opposition Bench, and the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, that I express the hope that the House will not reject this Bill upon the Second Reading. But, my Lords, I have very nearly as serious objections to take to some of the provisions in the Bill as have been stated by the noble Viscounts who have spoken.

With regard to some of the figures given by the Lord Chancellor, I think they will hardly carry him to all the conclusions he desires to draw from them. When you talk about rates in urban districts being 8s. and 10s. in the £, and try to compare them with rates in other places, you are bound to remember that the rates in towns include a great many things which are not done in the country. Before you can make a careful and useful examination of the amount of rates in town and cities you must not forget that they are, generally speaking, to be divided into two great classes—namely, those which are burdensome, and burdensome only, and those which I shall describe as beneficial, rates which are really not so much rates as we generally speak of them, but rather the payment for services rendered—services undertaken by the community because they can be done cheaper by the community than if each individual had to do them for himself.

But to my mind the curious feature of the noble and learned Lord's speech is that it is so entirely inconsistent with most of the arguments which have been used for this Bill in Scotland by at least one of the Law Officers of the Crown. I will say at once that, so far as the noble and learned Lord's description and analysis of the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, for which I was responsible, is concerned, I have no word of complaint. It was absolutely fair; and it was fair even to admitting that, so far as the question of a change of basis of rating from annual to capital value is concerned, there was not one word in that Report which could be said to advocate it. We have had an interesting discussion, and the noble Lord who moved the second Reading of the Bill seemed to have been advised to minimise it as far as possible. It was a very small thing, hardly worth taking serious exception to, and it was purely preliminary to another and greater change. That is what the Lord Advocate said. He described it as a simple addition of a column to the existing valuation roll. I have grave doubts whether that is accurate, because I do not believe it is possible to take the capital value of each individual entry on the valuation roll apart from properties as a whole. You can value the annual return which you get from a house or a farm, but the value of the whole of a man's property when you begin to take the capital value is a very different thing. But I venture to say that only by the way. The Lord Advocate went on to argue that it was only—

> "To make us able to note the additions to or deductions from capital value according as there is a rise or fall in the market value of land in Scotland. . . . The Bill is valuation and nothing more. . . . It is a first step towards the solution, not only of the rating question, but of housing and other useful questions, and also the question of the transfer of land at capital value to public authorities."

The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack said, in no measured language, that no one would be foolish enough to suppose that you could charge the whole of the rates to the land value. He characterised that as nonsense, and said in a later part of his speech that it was nothing but a foolish dream. But that is exactly what the Solicitor-General for Scotland, both in his Report and in his speeches, has been advocating over the whole length and breadth of Scotland. On the Second Reading of this Bill in another place, he said the Bill was—

> "introduced not only for the purpose which the Lord Advocate had said, but as an essential preliminary to a change in the system of rating."

They were, he said, to—

> "blot out altogether buildings and improvements as the standard of rating, and take not the fruit of men's labour but simply the land."

That is the very proposal which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has just described as nonsense and as a foolish dream. The Solicitor-General also said, with regard to the objection that we ought to know what was intended before we passed the Bill, that he did not dispute the relevancy of the objection—

> "Because it was quite obvious that if the second step was unwise and imprudent, they ought not to take the first step."

It is because of the arguments which have been used by the Solicitor-General who, after all, being a Law Officer of the Crown, may, I think, by outsiders like myself, be supposed to know what the intentions of the Government are, that we have looked upon this Bill askance and with doubt.

You cannot judge of the position in which we are placed without looking at the history of this matter. The noble Viscount who has moved the rejection of this Bill is absolutely right when he says that for years past there has been a school of economists in Scotland who desire to put the whole of the burden of local rates upon the value of land, and upon the value of land alone. That was the idea which underlay the Glasgow Bill, which, in 1906, was passed by the present House of Commons and referred to a Select Committee, of which the Solicitor-General was Chairman. The Lord Advocate had praised that Bill in no measured terms; he had practically accepted it in all its main principles, but when it went to the Select Committee it was condemned, and condemned so thoroughly that I hope your Lordships will allow me to read the verdict of the

Select Committee upon it. Describing the Bill the Committee said—

> "The Bill does not, therefore, give complete effect to the new rating standard which it sets up. It is confined in its operation to burghs. It leaves owners as well as occupiers of land and buildings still rated on the present basis, the rental of the whole composite subject. It leaves them so rated in the same proportions as they are rated at present. And it proposes to levy on owners alone an additional rate, fixed no doubt on a basis assumed to be sound, but absolutely arbitrary in amount. Your Committee consider these proposals to be indefensible."

The Select Committee proceeded to formulate another scheme for attaining the object which contained this conclusion—

> "That a new standard of rating based upon the yearly value of land apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, is sound and would prove advantageous."

That is the system which the Committee supported, with the Solicitor-General in the chair, and which the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack describes as nonsense and as a foolish dream. In another paragraph the Committee went on to say that—

> "So far as both occupiers and owners are concerned, the new standard of rating should be substituted for the present standard; and within the category of owners ought to be included owners of feu-duties whensoever created."

That last proposal caused such a stir in Scotland that one of the largest and most influential deputations which ever came from Scotland to England waited upon the Prime Minister to protest against it, and the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer together announced that they would have nothing to do with it and did not intend to support the scheme. Since that part of the Solicitor-General's scheme was put aside a great deal of the enthusiasm which had been created in certain towns and municipalities for this alteration in the basis of rating evaporated and disappeared.

But the other conditions propounded by the Solicitor-General and his Committee, which I have quoted, have never until to-night been disavowed by any responsible member of the Government. Just let me remind you what they were. The proposal of the Committee was that a new standard of rating based upon the yearly value of land apart from the buildings and improvements upon it is sound and would prove advantageous, and in speech after speech throughout Scotland the Solicitor-General has maintained his view that the basis of rating is to be wholly changed and is to be put upon the land and the land alone. I could give half a dozen quotations, if it were worth while to do so, in perfectly distinct terms urging, with all the authority that appertains to a Law Officer of the Crown, the very scheme which we have heard described from the Woolsack as nonsense and a foolish dream. I say distinctly that we are entitled to know whether the Government as a whole, repudiate the proposals put forward by the Select Committee of the other House and advocated with almost wearisome reiteration by the Solicitor-General.

I turn for a moment to the suggestion that capital value is a good basis for rating. The noble Viscount on the Front Opposition Bench said, with perfect accuracy, that the law in England and in Scotland is practically the same. In England it is the basis of what the hypothetical tenant would give for a yearly occupation of the property; in Scotland the assessor is bound to take the yearly rent stated in the lease, provided the lease does not extend for more than twenty-one years, in which case he is entitled to go behind it and to put a valuation of his own, subject to appeal. I was surprised to hear the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack give such unmitigated support to the idea of rating on capital value. Just look what it means. I agree with him that some urban expenditure increases the value of urban property. The Minority Report, to which reference has been made, expressed the opinion that to that extent there ought to be placed on the value of the land a certain rate, strictly defined in amount and applicable to purposes carefully defined by Parliament. Much as that Report has been misrepresented, by every word to which I subscribed five or six years ago I stand to-day. In that Report there will not be found an iota of argument for substituting capital for annual value as the basis of rating. Such a change would have the opposite effect from that intended.

It is argued that our present system penalises the outskirts of a town in favour of the central parts, that greater relative burdens are put on the suburbs than on the central parts of most towns. In some aspects that is true, but if you go on capital value you will do what has been done in America and other places—you will impose a penalty on the retention of open spaces, and will do greater harm than can be easily imagined. Let me give an illustration. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack advocates it, and says that as things stand the annual value is not a fair representation of the real value to the owner. Take such a property as Holland House. It is obviously an advantage to the community that open spaces should be retained, but if for rating purposes you are going to value Holland House upon its capital value and rate the owner on such value, you would make it impossible to maintain such an open space as that within a city; and, instead of making it easier to give people more space, you would lead directly to what has been done in New York and other cities, where buildings have been extended vertically instead of laterally.

I know that the question of unoccupied land in towns is one of the most difficult problems for rating purposes which can be faced. I do not think the illustrations given by the noble Lord who moved the Second Reading of the Bill were very happy, and I think they were completely disposed of by the noble Viscount who spoke from the Front Opposition Bench. It is not necessary to have recourse to capital value in order to bring, for such purposes as may be right, unoccupied land into the net of rating. It can be done perfectly well by a modification of the legal maxim *rebus sic stantibus*, and by allowing the whole of the circumstances to be taken into account. For that purpose it is not necessary to make such a violent change as to go to capital value. As I have said, I am anxious to see this Bill discussed fully in Committee. I believe that there are many provisions in it which, in themselves, are so supremely absurd that they cannot be defended. We cannot discuss them satisfactorily on the Second Reading; and I hope that the proposal to reject the Bill will not be pressed, although I trust I shall not be told afterwards that I am committed to the idea of rating upon capital value if I do not venture to oppose the Second Reading. I believe we can much more successfully discuss the various proposals of the Bill in Committee, and therefore I hope the noble Viscount on the back benches will not persist in his Amendment.

LORD SALTOUN: My Lords, one thing I regret is that the real intentions of the Government have not been put into this Bill. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has to a certain extent informed us what is intended, but at the same time the proposals of the Government are not before us in the Bill, and it is, therefore, very difficult to discuss them. The capital land value is not the value at which the subject might be estimated at its present state, but a value created by the Bill and which outside the Bill has no existence. The value is to be the value with the land divested of buildings, erections, or improvements of whatever nature, on, in, or under the soil. Sub-section (1) of Clause 3 requires only a careful study to realise the enormous task laid upon owner, assessor, and town or county council, and, finally, upon the Judge of the Court of Session in the Valuation Appeal Court.

Then we come to "improvements in or under the soil." This is so comprehensive as to force us to contemplate land in its original primeval state, for everything that has been done and has assisted to bring it into its present state has been an improvement. Further, the land must be divested of "work of drainage and reclamation." How far back must we go back to ascertain this? How are we to find out what has been done to each piece of ground during the past centuries? No owner can show it, and it seems to me that the more this sub-section is examined the more impossible it appears. We still have to consider and ascertain how much of the benefit thereof is unexhausted at present. This only adds to the difficulties, and I do not press it further. Capital land value is, then, the value of a figment of the imagination. Then, again, is there such a thing as a willing seller under these conditions, and, if there is, where will he find an "open market" for his commodity?

But even this is not enough. It has to be sold "free of all burdens, public and private." Can you imagine any estate without a public or private burden? It does not exist upon this earth. Why should the owners of subjects in Scotland, from the smallest cottage to the largest estate, be subjected to the necessity of performing these feats of imagination, and afterwards compelled to defend them against other conclusions arrived at by the assessor? The assessors already have their hands full, and town or county councils may well shrink from the tremendous task imposed upon them under this Bill and the difficulties they would have to face in the complex questions that would arise. According to the Secretary for Scotland, not one of the thirty-three county councils, and only four of the 205 town councils in Scotland have resolved in favour of the Bill; and one of these—Glasgow—the promoter of this legislation, which has already spent £2,500 on the promotion of this Bill, is now anxious to have the cost borne by the State, and to have a schedule of particulars to be required from proprietors introduced. Their assessor, who has always been supposed to approve of his employers' project, has relieved himself of any chance of having to carry out the Bill by sending in his resignation at the end of last month.

Clause 1 excludes from the operation of the Bill heritages valued by the assessor of railways and canals. This, I think, shows ignorance of the practice of valuation. At present all companies, water, gas, and others, having continuous lands in more than one burgh, parish, or county, can apply to be valued by the railway assessor. We have, therefore, the result that any company falling under this definition may escape the operation of the Act by applying to the railway assessor. There are a great number of tenement houses in Edinburgh in which flats have been sold at different times, entirely without consideration of the feu-duty. Think of the labour it would be for the proprietor of the seventh or eighth storey to have to assess his proportion of the right in the ground. The assessor would be sure to make a different assessment, and endless litigation would result. Then take the case of houses with terraces and gardens. These gardens are part of the feu and belong jointly to all the feuers in the terrace. What is to happen to them? Probably the owner bought the house at a larger price because of these amenities, but now he is to suffer, and not only to suffer, but to enter on law suits to determine which part of the garden belongs to him and how he can utilise it to pay his assessment.

I should like to impress upon your Lordships the difference between a lease and a feu. In a lease there may be unearned increment. If houses are let on a ninety-nine years lease the ground landlord's grandson, at the end of that term, does certainly reap a benefit from the increase of the town and the enhanced value of the house; but, in the case of the ground landlord who feus the land, it is absolutely impossible that either he or his descendants can ever reap unearned increment under any conditions. Under the proposed system it will be practically taking the ownership from the ground-owner. In my opinion, sales will probably take the place of feus in the future. The result would be disastrous to the poor man, who would have to find money for the purchase as well as for the building. At present, for a feu duty of about £1 per site, a labourer can acquire land, and can always borrow two thirds of the cost of the house he erects, which would be an improving property as the land round him was built upon. He thus has his home and a stake and vote—not always wisely used—in the country.

I apologise to your Lordships for bringing before you a personal case, but it is a very good illustration. We have heard a certain amount of discussion upon "in and about" towns. Well, "in and about" in Scotland does not only mean the unbuilt-upon parts of towns; it also means land within the burgh boundary. I should like to give figures showing how it will affect my own town—Fraserburgh. The population is 10,500, and the assessable rental £48,625, It was, until a few years ago, a fishing community, and the value of the fish landed during the past year was £309,000, and the value cured and sold £500,000. That shows that they do a very large trade, but the total feus rental is only £2,400. The burgh area up to 1899, including 42 acres of common, was 192 acres; it was extended in 1899 by 92 acres, making the total 284 acres. In 1903 a pneumatic tyre works took ground outside the burgh boundary of 20 acres, with the option of another 50 acres. That year the town council and the tool works company asked me to allow the burgh boundary to be extended. The beneficial results to both parties are plain. The town got the advantage of the rates, and it was a great benefit to the tool factory because they got the benefit of the water supply and other services at a cheaper rate. The burgh boundary was increased by another 86 acres, which raised the acreage, including the common, to 370. According to this Bill the whole of the land unbuilt upon—180 acres—within the burgh boundary is liable to be claimed and assessed for building value. This, I contend, would be obviously unfair.

It has been said that this Bill has nothing whatever to do with the Henry George school of politics. I think everything shows that it had its origin in that school. There is not the slightest doubt that the parent of this Bill—the Glasgow Bill—was a rating Bill, and it is only from that that we can ascertain what the proposal of the Government is with regard to this Bill. This Bill is one of the worst ever introduced into your Lordships' House. It is so bad in principle that I should like to see it thrown out.

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned until To-morrow."—(*The Earl of Mar and Kellie.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned accordingly.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BILL.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I understand that the Bill in respect of which my noble friend the Leader of the House moved the suspension of Standing Order No. XXXIX., has not yet arrived from the other House. Therefore the Motion will have to be again put down To-morrow.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 25th March, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill; Dublin and South Eastern Railway Bill; Seaham Harbour Bill.—As amended considered; to be read the third time.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Reported, with an Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP I.).

Mr. ASHTON reported from the Commmittee on Group 1 of Railway Bills; That Mr. Thomas Richards (Monmouth) one of the Members of the said Committee, was not present during the sitting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP I.).

Mr. ASHTON reported from the Committee on Group 1 of Private Bills: That Mr. Stephen Collins, one of the Members of the said Committee, was not present during the sitting of the Committee this day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to empower the London County Council to construct and work tramways and make a new street and street improvements and other works in the county of London; and for other purposes." [London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the Rhymney Railway Company to reconstruct their Cardiff passenger station;—to make a new railway; to raise additional capital; and for other purposes." [Rhymney Railway Bill [Lords.] .]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision with reference to the registration under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1907, of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society as a limited company, and the alteration of its constitution, the extension of its objects and business, and the sub-division of its shares, by substituting a memorandum and articles of association for its deed of settlement and existing laws and regulations, and for the repeal of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society's Act, 1897; and for other purposes." Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [Lords.].

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords]; Rhymney Railway Bill [Lords]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Newport, against; to lie upon the Table.

[ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Maryport, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Harlesden; and Ilkley; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Coleshill; Leeds; London; North West Wilts; Salisbury; Tamworth; and Tonbridge to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Shaw, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Bolton (two); Bradford; Clapham; Cwmbran; Edinburgh; Maryport; Oxford; Rothesay; Saffron Walden; Saint Pancras; Shalf; and Upper Holloway; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Petition from Macduff, for prevention; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Central Finsbury; and Limehouse; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Copy presented of Return of Advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of March, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXPLOSION AT LORD ASHTOWN'S LODGE GLENAHIERY, COUNTY WATERFORD.

Copies presented, of the Reports of County Inspector Jennings, Royal Irish Constabulary, to the Police Authorities, dated 14th August, 1907, 17th August, 1907, and 14th September, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COAL EXPORTS, ETC.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th February; Mr. David Alfred Thomas]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 100.]

MILE END OLD TOWN.

Copy presented, of Report to the President of the Local Government Board on an Inquiry into the Administration of the Guardians of the Hamlet of Mile End Old Town [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POSTAL AGREEMENT (MOZAMBIQUE).

Copy presented, of Postal Agreement for the exchange of Postal Parcels between the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the Portuguese Colony of Mozambique, dated 22nd February, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 16) Warrant, 1908, dated 26th February, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 17) Warrant, 1908, dated 7th March, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Post Office—Sick Pay of Unestablished Officers.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he has ascertained that it is a fact that the sick pay of unestablished men, who have met with accidents on duty, has been reduced since July last; and, as this affects men on small pay, will he take steps to see that the former practice of paying full wages to unestablished officers absent from duty through such accidents is reverted to.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Prior to 1st July last, on which date the Workmen's Compensation Act, which applies to Government servants, became law, unestablished officers of the Post Office received full pay when their absence from duty was due to accident on duty. The men in question get the full benefit of the provisions of the Act, which are in some respects more and in other respects less favourable than the arrangements in force before.

Evicted Tenants—Reinstatement of Mrs. O'Shaughnessy.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in regard to the case of Mrs. Ellen O'Shaughnessy, whose late husband was evicted from his farm at Kilbraher, Dromina, Charleville, negotiations were opened by the Estates Commissioners over two years ago with a view to her reinstatement; whether Colonel Orpin, the landlord, and the present occupier, Timothy Griffin, are willing to hand over this farm to Mrs. O'Shaughnessy on condition that Griffin is provided with another suitable holding; whether he is aware that the Commissioners stated last year that they were engaged in trying to procure such suitable holding for Griffin; and whether he will now state what steps, if any, they have taken within the past year to bring about the desired result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are still negotiating with Timothy Griffin with the object of providing him with a holding in lieu of the farm at present in his occupation, in order that the latter may be given to Mrs. O'Shaughnessy.

Reinstatement of Richard Foy.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received an application from Richard Foy, formerly of Mayo, but now of Sligo, who claims reinstatement in the farm from which his father, Richard Foy, was evicted, and which farm is situate in the townland of Ballinaraw, near Bunninadden, Ballymote, County Sligo; and whether, as this tenant was capriciously evicted without compensation, and in view of the many other circumstances surrounding the eviction, the Estates Commissioners will take action with the view of having these orphans either reinstated in the old place or else provided with a farm equally good.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received and inquired into the application in question, and have decided that the applicant is a fit person to be provided with a holding if one can be found for him. The holding formerly occupied by the evicted tenant is in the occupation of another tenant.

New Wells in the Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland in view of the fact that the Local Government Board state that during the past three years four new wells have been sunk in the Island of Lewis and that three more are expected to be completed by May, will he name the townships in which these seven new wells are repectively situated.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) Further inquiries show that greater progress has been made than was stated in the Answer to my hon. friend on 16th March. The facts are these. Since 1905 ten wells have been sunk and protected at Knock, Carloway, Lochgainmhich, Cross, Skigersta, Coulregein, Tong, Melbost, Habost, and Raernish. Five wells are under construction, one at Branahine and four at Aignish.

Local Education Authorities and the Provision of Meals Act.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can give the names of the local education authorities that have adopted the Provision of Meals Act, and the amount of the rate they are levying to provide the food, etc., required.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Except in cases where it is desired to spend money from the rates upon the purchase of food under Section 3 local authorities are not required by the Act to inform the Board of Education of their proceedings under it, and I have, therefore, no complete information as to the authorities who have in one way or another taken advantage of its provisions. The following local education authorities have been authorised by the Board to spend money from the rates upon the purchase of food:—England: Aston Manor Urban District; Bath County Borough; Birmingham County Borough; Bootle County Borough; Bradford County Borough; Brighton County Borough; Bury St. Edmunds County Borough; Cannock Urban District; Crewe Borough; Durham County Council; Erith Urban District; Farnworth Urban District; Gillingham Borough; Halifax County Borough; Hartlepool Borough; Hastings County Borough; Hebburn Urban District; Huddersfield County Borough; Keighley Borough; Kent County Council; King's Norton and Northfield Urban District; Manchester County Borough; Newcastle-upon-Tyne County Borough; Norwich County Borough; Nottingham County Borough; St. Helens County Borough; Sheffield County Borough; South Shields County Borough; Swindon Borough; Tottenham Urban District; Wallasey Urban District; Walthamstow Urban District; Workington Borough; York County Borough. Wales: Barry Urban District; Cardiff County Borough; Mountain Ash Urban District; Newport County Borough; Swansea County Borough. I am not able to state that amount expended by each local authority to meet the cost so incurred, but under Section 3 of the Act it is limited to the amount which would be produced by a rate of ½d. in the £.

The Bar Council and the Incorporated Law Society, and the new Law Courts.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the plans for the new Law Courts are prepared; and, if so, whether he is willing to submit them for criticism to the Bar Council and the Incorporated Law Society.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The plans have been prepared and submitted to the Lord Chief Justice. I have no doubt that his approval will carry with it that of the Bar Council and the Incorporated Law Society.

Licensing Compensation.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that in some counties a considerable number of houses are being sent up to the compensation authority, and that the funds available for compensation from balances and this year's levy will probably be insufficient for compensating all the houses whose licences would not be renewed; and whether, in view of the provisions contained in Clause 44 of the Licensing Bill, his consent will be granted to raising a loan under the powers given to a local authority under the Licencing Act of 1904.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have no actual information to the effect of the first part of the Question, but it is probable that in the current year, as in past years, renewal authorities will in some cases be found to have referred more licences to the compensation authorities than those authorities would, if they refused renewal in all cases, be able to pay for out of current revenue. It is to be observed that, under Section 3 (5) of the Act of 1904, the compensation authorities are to have regard, in the exercise of their powers, to the funds available for the purpose. As regards the latter part of the Question, the Answer must depend to a great extent upon the facts of any particular case which may be submitted to me; but, speaking generally, I do not think that I should be justified in granting sanction to loans which would have the effect of charging the compensation levies for future years with awards of compensation made on a scale which it is one of the objects of the Licensing Bill to replace by a less extravagant scale.

Rate of Wages at London Small Arms Factory.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can enforce the payment of the same rates of wages from the London Small Arms Company on Government contracts as are paid by the War Office at Enfield, as the wages paid by the London Small Arms Company are much below the wages paid by the Government for the same work.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There is no power to compel the adoption by contractors of rates of wages paid in Government factories, but the fair wages clause in War Office contracts requires the payment of such wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen in the district where the work is carried out, and if any evidence is produced to show that this clause is being infringed the matter shall be at once investigated.

Titles of Volunteer and Yeomanry Regiments.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Volunteer battalions or Yeomanry regiments of which the names or titles possess historic associations will be allowed to retain such names or titles in the Territorial Force.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is intended to retain, as far as possible, the names and titles of Yeomanry regiments and Volunteer battalions which possess historic assocations. If the hon. Member will kindly refer to the special Army Order of 18th March, dealing with the organisation and establishment of the Territorial Force, he will find full information on this point.

Territorial Force Regulations.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether his expectation that the whole of the Army Act would be re-cast, probably at a near date, is likely to be fulfilled; whether the rules of procedure contained in the Manual of Military Law, dated November last, are to be revised in the portions dealing with the Territorial Force; when promised revise of the King's Regulations now in the press will be issued; and at what date the book of Territorial Force Regulations now being drawn up will be available.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The right hon. Baronet is apparently, in the first part of the Question, alluding to an observation I made in debate on 18th March of last year on the Army (Annual) Bill. The time has not yet come when it is possible to codify profitably—several important Acts are obsolescent, but not yet obsolete. The rules of procedure are applicable to all persons subject to military law. They contain no special provisions as regards Auxiliary Force and will not require revision consequent on the transfer of the Yeomanry and Volunteers to the Territorial Forces. The new edition of the King's Regulations is now being issued. It is not possible to say at what date the new Territorial Force regulations will be available, but it is hoped that they will be ready in two or three months. Several sets of interim regulations have already appeared, and rapid progress is being made towards the completion of such a volume as already exists in the case of the Volunteers.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Royal Academy, Woolwich.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of increasing the weekly wages of the workmen employed in the Royal Academy at Woolwich to the same level as that paid to labourers in the Ordnance Factories.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): All I can say at this moment is that I have directed inquiry into this matter.

Government Licensed Property.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the Prime Minister, whether, looking at the large price recently obtained by the War Office on the sale of the "Coach and Horses" Inn, he will consider the advisability of immediately selling all the public-houses belonging to His Majesty's Government.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): No, Sir.

CAPTAIN FABER: Arising out of that reply may I ask whether the reason is that the value of public-houses has depreciated owing to the Licensing Bill?

[No Answer was returned.]

CAPTAIN FABER: May I press for an Answer?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member can form his own judgment.

British Indians in Canada.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and the leave of the House, I should like to be allowed to correct a misreport, in a rather important matter, of some words that fell from me yesterday in answer to a Question put by my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean. As this report, I understand, occurs in most of the public prints, probably the fault was mine. I am made to say that we had decided to send out an envoy to Canada to consider the case of the Indians now in Vancouver. What I meant to say, and what, I think, I did say, was this—that I had the matter of these Indians under my very careful supervision, and that I am discussing it both with the Government of India and, in concert with the Colonial Office here, with an envoy deputed to this country by the Dominion Government, with the hope of ending, if possible, this extremely difficult and possibly dangerous situation.

Indians at Vancouver.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyne): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has yet any information which will explain on what grounds the Indians landing at Vancouver from the "Monteagle" were ordered to be deported by the Canadian Federal Authority; whether opposition to their landing came from the Federal Authority and not from the Provincial Government; and if he has information on these points will he give it to the House, and say whether the decision of the Federal Authority has the approval of His Majesty's Government.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): No, Sir; I am afraid I can add nothing to my Answer to the hon. Member's Question of Friday last.

MR. WEDGWOOD asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would make inquiries as to the reasons which actuated the Federal Government in deporting these Indians.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to say that inquiries were proceeding.

Indentured Labour in the Witwatersrand Mines.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will suggest to the Transvaal Government the advisability of maintaining the system of Chinese indentured labour in the Witwatersrand mines, in view of the low death rate of the Chinese as compared with the death rate of the native mine-workers.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir.

Medical Inspection of Native Labour at Witwatersrand.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the post of district medical officer for the Witwatersrand mines has yet been filled; and, if not, whether he will suggest to the Transvaal Government the urgent importance of filling the vacancy with a highly qualified man in view of the heavy mortality among the natives working in the mines.

MR. CHURCHILL: I regret that I cannot add anything to my previous replies to questions on this subject.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Is the right hon. Gentleman in communication with the Government of the Transvaal on the subject?

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir. I do not think it necessary to open such communication.

EARL WINTERTON: Does not the right hon. Gentleman intend to take any action on this very important matter?

MR. CHURCHILL: No circumstances have yet been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies which make it incumbent on him to interfere in what is essentially a matter for the self-governing Colony itself to decide.

Licensed Houses closed in Nottingham.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state how many licensed houses in the city of Nottingham have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904; what amount was paid as compensation in respect of each house; and what proportion of the money was apportioned to the owner of the house and to the tenant respectively.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The annual volumes of licensing statistics show that eighteen licensed premises in the city of Nottingham have been closed with compensation during the years 1905–6–7; and that the compensation amounted to a total of £22,634 3s. 3d., of which the licence holders were awarded a total sum of £1,903 1s. 3d. or a little over 8 per cent. I am unable to give the figures for individual houses.

Child Customers in London Public-houses.

CAPTAIN FABER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether orders have been issued to the metropolitan police that licensed victuallers supplying children under fourteen years of age with beer in bottles with sealed corks or gummed labels should be prosecuted.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Answer is in the negative; but I may add that the question of what is the precise meaning of the provision in the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children Act, 1901, with regard to corked and sealed vessels is about to be submitted by way of special case for the decision of the High Court of Justice.

CAPTAIN FABER: Meanwhile will it be legal to go on selling in sealed bottles?

MR. GLADSTONE: Pending a legal decision the police will not take proceedings.

Clubs and the Licensing Bill.

CAPTAIN FABER: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the proposed new Licensing Act, any person found the worse for drink in a club will be summoned before a bench of magistrates, as at present happens to those found the worse for drink on licensed premises.

MR. GLADSTONE: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. It is not a criminal offence under the existing law for a person to be drunk in a club, and the Licensing Bill makes no alteration in this respect.

Captain FABER: As a person may be drunk in a club and not in a public-house, is one inspector in plain clothes to do the work of a district where forty or fifty police now are entering public-houses?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That question should be raised on the Bill.

Earl WINTERTON asked whether under the Bill a plain-clothes inspector would be instructed to report in case of drunkenness?

Mr. GLADSTONE: When the Bill is passed I will be very glad to answer that Question.

Captain FABER: Will the plain clothes gentlemen have to wake up unoffending persons in arm chairs?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That Question should be raised on the Bill.

Midland Railway Re-housing Scheme at Somers Town.

Mr. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has any information as to the intentions of the Midland Railway Company in regard to their development of the property in Somers Town, the freehold of which they acquired nine years ago, particularly in regard to the re-housing of the people.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): I have no information as to the intentions of the company with respect to this subject, but I understand that the St. Pancras Borough Council have been in negotiation with the company with regard to the property, and I have requested the council to inform me of the present position of the matter.

Mr. LEA: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that in the last two years I have on more than one occasion put Questions with regard to the policy consistently pursued by this railway company, a policy of obviating their obligations under the Housing of the Working Classes Act?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: Yes, I am aware of that, but the company and the borough council are divided as to where the houses should be situated. The company own the freehold of the site near the station, which they contemplate utilising for the extension of their property. They have offered the council an alternative site, but the council and the railway company cannot agree. I have done my best to secure that both of them should come to an as immediate decision as possible.

Mr. LEA: May I ask whether in the meantime the people in the neighbourhood are suffering while the railway company are trying to save the pockets of their shareholders?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I can assure the hon. Member that what I can do I have done and will continue to do.

Single School Areas.

Mr. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board have yet allotted any portion of the £100,000 granted for the provision of council schools in single school areas; if so, to what local authorities, and to what amount in each case; and what has been the total number of children for whom such accommodation has been requested.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): Yes, Sir. Certain grants have been provisionally sanctioned. A Return showing the applications received and the Board's action upon them is in preparation and will be issued shortly.

School Accommodation in the West Riding.

Mr. LANE-FOX: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the total accommodation in elementary schools in the West Riding was 257,380 for the year 1906–7, and that the average attendance for the same period was 174,062, showing an excess of accommodation over attendance of 83,318 places; whether there are a number of new council schools sanctioned and now building which will shortly add largely to this excessive accommodation; and whether, in sanctioning the building of new schools in the West Riding in future, he will bear this excess in mind, in view of the burden thrown upon the ratepayers.

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, Sir; I am aware of the facts stated and also of the fact that it is proposed to provide several new schools. It is not, however, the practice of the Board in deciding as to the necessity of a proposed school in a particular village to take into consideration the number of vacant places in other portions of an area some 2,500 square miles in extent.

*MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): Is it not the fact that there is an excess of school places in the old agricultural areas and a dearth of school places in the new industrial communities.

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, I conceive that to be the explanation.

MR. LANE-FOX: Will not the result of the present building scheme be to raise the excess of school places to something like 120,000?

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, but I have endeavoured to explain that while there may be an excess in some places there is a deficiency in others which it is necessary to supply.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): Is there so large an excess in any other county in England?

MR. MCKENNA asked for notice.

Barwick in-Elmet School.

MR. LANE-FOX: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board have received an appeal from the ratepayers of Barwick-in-Elmet for an inquiry to be held by the Board before the proposal of the local education authority of the West Riding to erect a provided school in that village, in addition to the existing Church school, is finally sanctioned; and whether he will grant such inquiry.

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, Sir; an appeal has been received and the case is now under consideration, but I am not yet in a position to say whether a public inquiry will be necessary.

Education Syllabus.

SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education when he will present and circulate, as a Parliamentary Paper, the syllabus contained in a Return to an Order of the House of Lords, numbered 115–1, and ordered to be printed on the 14th June, 1906, referred to in the first schedule of the Education Bill, 1908.

MR. MCKENNA: The Paper, to which the hon. Baronet refers, was delivered to the House on Friday, the 13th instant.

Register of Teachers.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what steps are being taken towards the formation of a registration council, with a view to the establishment of a register of teachers, as provided by the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of last session.

MR. MCKENNA: In view of the terms of Section 16 of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, which contemplated the establishment of "a Registration council representative of the teaching profession," and assigned to such a council and not to the Board of Education the "duty of forming and keeping a register," I have thought it best to await an expression of views from as many sections as possible of the teaching profession. I was informed almost immediately after the passing of the Act that a considerable number of influential bodies in the teaching profession were going to hold a series of conferences with a view to arriving, so far as possible, at some agreed lines upon which such a council might in their view advantageously be formed. I have only in the last day or two received information as to the points of agreement reached at these conferences, and I am considering this information, with a view possibly to seeing some of the representatives of the bodies who have been meeting, and also to discovering whether the proposals appear to command the support of "the teaching profession" of which the new Registration

Council is to be "representative" under Section 16 of the Act.

*SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): What is it proposed to do with the balance of money amounting to about £2,800 of the old Registration Council?

MR. McKENNA: It would be premature at present to decide as to the disposal of that fund.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS: Is it intended to take over the staff of the old Registration Council; and, if not, will they be compensated for dismissal?

MR. McKENNA: The staff of the new Registration Council is not in the hands of the Board, and I can say nothing on the matter.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS: But the money is in the hands of the Board, I understand?

MR. McKENNA: Yes, but it would be premature to say what is to be done with it.

Burford Grammar School.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education on what grounds he has refused the request embodied in a resolution of the local education authority of Oxfordshire, that the conditions set out in Article 5 of the Secondary School Regulations should be waived in the case of Burford Grammar School.

MR. McKENNA; Article 5 provides that no catechism or formulary distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught except to scholars whose parents or guardians have requested the governors in writing to provide such instruction. The Board are satisfied that under the scheme regulating the foundation there is no legal difficulty in complying with the Article. The onus of adducing adequate reasons for the waiving of this regulation rests with the governors, and, in my opinion, no special reasons for failing to comply have been shown.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: Have no complaints been received from the neighbourhood?

MR. McKENNA: If everybody is contented to receive the instruction it will be given. The regulation is only a safeguard for those persons who do not wish it to be given.

Enfield Small Arms Factory—Case of J. West.

MR. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can inform the House of his decision in relation to J. West, late an employee at the Small Arms Factory, Enfield.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN Dewsbury): As I have already explained to the hon. Member, the circumstances of this case do not justify any further grant from the Superannuation Vote. The case, however, is a hard one, and inasmuch as West was employed from December 1888 to March 1890 at wages lower than he had been receiving before his accident, the Prime Minister has agreed to make good from a special fund at his disposal the amount the man may be said to have lost in this way. I am glad, therefore, to be able to inform the hon. Member that a grant has been made to West from this source of £35.

Moray Firth Trawling Dispute.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he intends to introduce a Bill to extend to England the law, now applicable to Scotland only, prohibiting the sale of fish caught by trawlers in Moray Firth in England.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I must refer my hon. friend to the reply given on 18th March to the hon. Member for Dumbartonshire.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): Has any effort been made by the Government to secure unanimity between the English, Scottish, and Irish Fishery Boards on this matter?

MR. SINCLAIR asked for notice.

Montgomerie and Company, Limited, *v.* The Burgh of Haddington.

MR. NEWNES (Nottinghamshire, Bassetlaw): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the judgment of the House of Lords in the case of Montgomerie and Company, Limited, Bermaline Mills, Haddington *v.* the Burgh of Haddington; and whether, in view of the present uncertain state of the law regarding this question, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation.

MR. SINCLAIR: I do not think that the state of the law in regard to the questions at issue in this case can be described as uncertain in view of the recent decision of the House of Lords, approving as it did, a unanimous decision of the Court of Session. It does not seem to me, therefore, that there is any call for legislation on the ground stated by my hon. friend.

Letting of Scottish Sheep Farms.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the decision of the Court of Session in the case of Gillespie against Riddell; and whether, in view of the serious effect this must have on the letting of sheep farms, he can say what steps can be taken, by legislation or otherwise, to secure to the agricultural tenant the fulfilment of engagements undertaken by a former tenant-in-entail.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): My attention has been called to this case. I understand, however, that it is not unlikely that the judgment of the Court of Session may be taken for review to the House of Lords, and in view of this the consideration of legislation would be premature. I may say, however, to my hon. friend, that I recognise the importance of the judgment. I gather that the decision truly reserves the right of the tenant to sue the representatives of the former entail proprietor in respect of failure fully to implement the original covenant; and certain further reservations are made. Notwithstanding this, I acknowledge that the situation produced by the decision will have to be carefully watched, and it may be taken that that will be done.

Mrs. Hegarty's Bantur Estate.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have taken any recent steps towards negotiating for the purchase of the estate of Mrs. Hegarty, Clonbanin, Bantur, county Cork, and, if so, with what result; and, in view of the fact that the holding from which Mr. O'Driscoll, whose present representative is John O'Driscoll, was evicted is now in the landlord's own possession, the Commissioners will proceed to exercise the powers vested in them by the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, with the object of reinstating the evicted tenant?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners are not at present negotiating for the purchase of this estate, but the matter referred to in the latter part of the Question is under their consideration.

MR. FLYNN: Are the Commissioners aware that this is a typical case, and that this landlady has a large quantity of land in this locality which she is using as a grazing ranch? Will not the Commissioners under the circumstances exercise the powers vested in them?

MR. BIRRELL: I will see that the views of the hon. Member are conveyed to the Commissioners.

Dromagh Untenanted Lands.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have had any recent communication with Mr. N. W. Leader, D.C., Dromagh, in respect to the available untenanted land in his possession; and, if not, whether, in view of this gentleman's previous offer to dispose of a small portion of this land to the Commissioners, and the need for the enlargement of present uneconomic holdings on the estate, and the acquisition of holdings suitable for deserving evicted tenants in the neighbourhood, for whom land is not elsewhere available, the Commissioners will send an inspector to make the necessary inquiries, and to open up negotiations with the landlord.

MR. BIRRELL: Mr. Leader has offered 197 acres of untenanted land for sale to the Estates Commissioners. An inspection of this land and of the other lands on the estate will shortly take place, and the question of acquiring the untenanted land for the enlargement of uneconomic holdings on the estate, or for providing holdings for evicted tenants will then be considered.

The Glenahiery Explosion—District Inspector Preston's Report.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the facts which prompted the Inspector General of Constabulary, Sir Antony MacDonnell, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General and the Chief Secretary to cause to be altered District Inspector Preston's statement of the 7th September into the form in which it appeared in his subsequent statement of the 11th September; and whether any of them had personally visited the scene of the outrage.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The facts have already been stated in answer to previous Questions. District Inspector Preston's report of 7th September was a report made to the police authorities for police purposes, and it was never altered. The law officers were of opinion that, inasmuch as this report contained suggestions and views of Mr. Preston and some matters outside his own knowledge, it could not be properly submitted to the parties, and they advised that the statement which the District Inspector was to submit to the parties should be confined to the actual matters to which he could personally depose. Neither the Inspector-General nor the Under-Secretary was responsible for this advice, and the Chief Secretary took no part whatever in the matter. None of the officials named had visited the scene of the explosion.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: May I ask the Attorney-General in view of the fact that this report contained, to use his own words, only those matters to which District Inspector Preston could personally depose, whether it is not a fact that that particular report of 11th September contained other matter than that to which Inspector Preston could personally depose? Did it not contain insinuations and other matters which afterwards were denied?

MR. CHERRY: No, Sir, I do not think it did. What I said was that the law officers advised that the statement which he was to submit should be confined to matters to which he could personally depose. The law officers did not interfere with the discretion of District Inspector Preston in carrying out that advice. They allowed him to prepare his own report, and did not in any way alter or touch anything he said. The only conclusions he arrived at in his second statement were in reference to facts connected with the placing of the pot on the window sill, and these were matters to which an expert witness might depose, and he might possibly be considered an expert witness.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): May I ask whether there is any foundation for the suggestion that what is called the second report—the statement of the 11th—was in any respect more prejudicial to the interests of Lord Ashtown than the original report of the 7th, and whether, as a matter of fact, the exact opposite is not the case, and that the second statement of 11th September excludes a number of statements in reference to Lord Ashtown which were included in the first one?

MR. CHERRY: I think that is so. Of course, that is a matter of opinion.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): Is the right hon. Gentleman able to afford the House any proof of that statement?

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Read the two documents.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: But is it not a matter of fact that the second report contained assumptions on the part of District Inspector Preston as well as facts?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better see the report.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): In view of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman tells us that the law officers of the Crown advised that this document should contain nothing but statements of fact, why was it that he did not see to it that those instructions and that advice was carried out by Inspector Preston, who allowed insinuations and suggestions to enter into the documents?

MR. CHERRY: I think, if I had directed Inspector Preston to alter his second statement, I know what would have been said by hon. Gentlemen opposite.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the reason why, upon the 12th September, the statement of District Inspector Preston of the 11th September, containing the suggestion that Lord Ashtown was responsible for, or privy to, the outrage on his own premises, and other insinuations afterwards proved in Court to be false, was furnished to the rural district council, instead of a statement by County Inspector Jennings, who had been on the scene of the outrage for a considerable time previously.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, is it in order that a statement should be made in a Question, and not an interrogation, that charges had been proved to be false in a Court of justice—because in my opinion that statement is false.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has himself just made a statement with regard to the case. I am afraid I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details to know whether the insinuations were proved in a Court to be false or not. Until the debate takes place I see no reason for refusing the Question.

MR. CHERRY: I cannot agree with the view of the hon. and gallant Member that the statement of 11th September contains a suggestion that Lord Ashtown was responsible for, or privy to, the outrage on his own premises. District Inspector Preston was the officer immediately in charge of the district, and had been specially recalled from Belfast for the purpose of investigating the case. Moreover, the county inspector had not made a thorough investigation of the matter or furnished a formal and complete report upon it, as the district inspector had done. The county inspector was on the scene on the day of the occurrence, but upon the return of the district inspector on 17th August he was relieved of the immediate charge of the case.

MR. BELLOC: Is the right hon. Gentleman or the Government prepared to accept that word "proved" in the Question as distinguished from the word "decided?"

MR. CHERRY: I should rather not give an opinion upon that. It is a matter upon which anybody can form his own judgment.

MR. MOONEY (Newry): Is it not a fact that the whole case before the Courts was whether or not a malicious outrage had been committed, and that the Court had no power to go into the question of who committed the outrage?

MR. CHERRY: That is so.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Is it not a fact that Inspector Jennings spent four hours in examining the results of the explosion immediately after it took place, and does the right hon. Member consider that the report of the county inspector was not of sufficient importance to be supplied to the parties in the case?

MR. CHERRY: I do not know exactly how long he spent there, but undoubtedly he was there on the day of the occurrence. The entire matter was handed over to the district inspector when he returned, and he forwarded to the Government a complete report of the whole circumstances of the case, which was in his charge and not in that of the county inspector.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the evidence on oath of District Inspector Preston at the trial in Waterford, on appeal, of the Glenahiery case, when he stated that he signed, at the bidding of a superior officer, a document clearly conveying an inference which he knew and admitted had no foundation in fact; and whether he can give the names of those persons present when District Inspector Preston was bidden to attach his signature to the document in question.

MR. CHERRY: My attention has been called to the evidence of District

Inspector Preston. My right hon. friend has already, in answer to questions on the 11th instant, expressed his view as to the manner in which the district inspector was induced under cross-examination to assent to statements so entirely at variance with the facts. Mr. Preston was not directed by any superior officer or any other Government official to attach his signature to any document whatsoever.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the statement of District Inspector Preston, dated the 7th September, circulated as a White Paper, is word for word as drawn up by him, or was the original in any way altered; and, if so, to what extent and by whom.

Mr. BIRRELL: Mr. Speaker, I have taken the responsibility of laying upon the Table a document which, upon the face of it. purports to be a copy of the Report of District Inspector Preston dated 7th September. In the circumstances, and subject to your ruling, I do not propose to answer this Question.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: Can the right hon. Gentleman give a better reason now than he gave before for the non-production of that document of the trial in Court?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question.

Captain CRAIG: Has it not been already admitted that the document was altered, and will the right hon. Gentleman put the House in possession of the original document?

Mr. BIRRELL: I had the document in my hand on the last occasion and I said that anyone could come and see it. But no one accepted the invitation.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether District Inspector Preston received any verbal or written instructions, when ordered to Glenahiery, as to the form his report should take; and, if so, from whom.

Mr. BIRRELL: No, Sir.

Mr. LONSDALE: On behalf of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if on the 29th February, 1908, four days before the date fixed for the hearing of the recent appeal in Lord Ashtown's case, the Assistant Under-Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant wrote to the solicitor for Lord Ashtown to say that he was directed by the Lord-Lieutenant to state that it was impossible to comply with his request for the production, on the hearing of the appeal, of any reports received from District Inspector Preston or other police officers prior to the date of the document of the 11th September, to which the signature of District Inspector Preston was attached; to what extent, if at all, was this decision modified by any subsequent instructions to the Inspector-General; can he explain why no notice of the modification, if any, was given to Lord Ashtown or his solicitor; and will he, having regard to the unexplained refusal of the Inspector-General upon the hearing of the appeal to produce any antecedent report by District Inspector Preston, lay upon the Table all the instructions given to the Inspector-General on the subject.

Mr. BIRRELL: In reply to a request from Lord Ashtown's solicitor that all reports of District Inspector Preston made prior to the report of 11th September should be produced in court, the Assistant Under-Secretary wrote on 29th February that it was not possible to agree that, in the public interest, privilege should not be claimed against the production of the documents. On 2nd March, the Inspector-General was informed upon the advice of the law officers that he was at liberty to produce District Inspector Preston's original report of 7th September, if circumstances should require. There was no reason why this fact should have been communicated to Lord Ashtown. The liberty to produce that document was given solely because of the imputations which had been made that the District Inspector had allowed the report to be altered with a view to making unfounded charges against Lord Ashtown. It would, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, be entirely contrary to practice to publish instructions given by the Government to the Inspector-General.

MR. LONSDALE: On behalf of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if County Inspector Jennings, of county Waterford, the superior officer of District Inspector Preston, after an exhaustive examination of the scene upon the very day of the Glenahiery explosion, furnished to the Inspector-General a detailed report of the results of his examination, and did he subsequently furnish a second report, in which he expressly stated his disagreement with the conclusions of District Inspector Preston; whether the Inspector-General, in declining to produce upon the recent hearing of the appeal either of these reports, was acting in accordance with instructions, and can he explain if, as stated by the Attorney-General for Ireland, the Inspector-General was given instructions to produce the antecedent report of District Inspector Preston, why he was forbidden to produce either of the reports of County Inspector Jennings; and whether, having regard to the fact that the two documents, dated the 7th September and 11th September, 1907, respectively, and bearing the signature of District Inspector Preston, have already been presented to this House, he will, in fairness to Lord Ashtown, and in view of the Motion standing in the name of the honourable Member for King's County for Wednesday, 1st April, lay upon the Table the two reports of County Inspector Jennings.

MR. BIRRELL: County Inspector Jennings arrived at the scene of explosion at a quarter past one on the day of the occurrence, and he furnished to the Inspector-General, by that evening's post, what he describes as a very hasty report giving the main features. He submitted a further report on 17th August, in which he stated that District Inspector Preston had then returned and would have every opportunity of fully inquiring into and investigating the occurrence. On the following day, 18th August, he submitted, without comment, a short report of the district inspector in which the latter stated that he was satisfied that the window and door of the room were open and that the shutters were not shut. It was not until after the district inspector's statement of 11th September, which states the same conclusions, had been communicated to the parties that the county inspector submitted a report expressing his dissent from those conclusions. This report was received on 16th September, and the county inspector was at once directed to communicate to the parties his statement indicating dissent from District Inspector Preston, which he did by letter on 18th September. It has already been stated that the Inspector-General in declining to produce the police reports was not acting upon instructions, but upon his own authority in accordance with the usual practice. The Attorney-General has not stated that the Inspector-General was given instructions to produce the antecedent report of District Inspector Preston, but, for reasons already stated, the Inspector-General was informed that he was at liberty to produce the document if the circumstances should require it. As the right hon. Gentleman asks for the publication of the two reports of County Inspector Jennings, in fairness to Lord Ashtown as he says, and I presume with his authority, I will lay these documents upon the Table at once.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland what were the reasons which prompted him to instruct the Inspector-General of Constabulary to depart from the usual practice and to produce in Court District Inspector Preston's report of 7th September, whereas no instructions were given to depart from the usual practice of claiming privilege in respect of County Inspector Jennings's reports.

MR. CHERRY: The Question does not correctly state the facts. The Inspector-General was not instructed to produce in Court District Inspector Preston's report of 7th September, but as I have already stated he was informed upon the advice of the Law Officers, that he was at liberty to produce the original report in question if circumstances should require. The reason for giving this advice was that District Inspector Preston's character had been personally assailed, and it had been repeatedly alleged, contrary to the fact, that he had allowed the report to be altered with a view to making unfounded charges against Lord Ashtown. No such question arose in regard to any report of County Inspector Jennings.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain from the Inspector-General why he objected to the production of the document at the trial, and on what ground he objected to do so?

MR. CHERRY: The Inspector-General states that during the course of the trial this advice was not present to his mind; in fact he forgot the instructions.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether County Inspector Jennings made any report or communication to the authorities at Dublin Castle with respect to the Glenahiery explosion before his report dated 14th September, other than the communication accompanying the report of the district inspector dated 18th August.

MR. CHERRY: Yes, Sir. The facts have now been stated in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin.

MR. WALTER LONG: Why has the right hon. Gentleman been so long in admitting it?

MR. CHERRY: The Question was not asked before.

City of Dublin Registration.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he will state the result of his inquiries into the allegation that requisition forms issued by the town clerk of the city of Dublin for registration purposes have been improperly collected, filled up, and signed by party agents; and whether, having regard to the fact that he has received assurances that evidence is forthcoming, he will direct proceedings to be taken in the matter.

MR. CHERRY: Proceedings have been commenced in respect of the matters referred to, and the first case will, I expect, be heard to-morrow in the Dublin Police Courts.

MR. MOONEY: Is it not a fact that one of the principal witnesses in this case is a Unionist registration agent who four years ago was sentenced to six months imprisonment for forging registration forms?

MR. CHERRY: I am not aware of that. I know nothing of the details of the case.

MR. MOONEY: Is it not within the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman that four years ago a Unionist registration agent was sentenced by Mr. Justice Gibson to six months imprisonment for forging registration forms for the county of Dublin?

MR. CHERRY: Yes, certainly. It is on the authority of that case that the present prosecution is instituted.

MR. LONSDALE: Will the right hon. Gentleman explain to the House what bearing that Answer has to the original Question?

[No Answer was returned.]

Ballyshannon Police Barracks.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that Head Constable Gilmour, of Ballyshannon, although having accommodation in barracks, draws a sum of 13s. a month lodging allowance at the expense of the Constabulary Force Fund; whether a single or married head constable will be transferred to that station to take up the vacant apartments provided in barracks and thus save £7 16s. annually; whether he is aware that two sons of Head Constable Gilmour are in employment in the town of Ballyshannon, contrary to the regulations bearing on that point; whether he is aware that on Wednesday evening, the 11th March, in presence of civilians, Head Constable Gilmour abused two Catholic constables on the public street in Ballyshannon when on duty, and threatened to have them banished from the service in a short time, and that a sergeant at present stationed in Ballyshannon had some time ago to report the head constable for similar conduct, resulting in the reprimand of Head Constable Gilmour; and whether, in view of the fact that 75 per cent. of the police in Ballyshannon are Catholics, he will consider the advisability of placing them under the control of a Catholic head constable.

MR. BIRRELL: The Inspector-General informs me that there is no room in Ballyshannon Barracks for the head constable, and in the circumstances he is exempted by statute from the usual deduction of 4*s*. 4*d*. a month for barrack accommodation, and draws the regulation lodging allowance of 8*s*. 8*d*. a month. This allowance is paid from the Vote and not from the Constabulary Force Fund. There are no vacant apartments in the barracks. There has been no infringement of the regulations in the employment of the head constable's sons in the town. On 11th March the head constable found fault with two Catholic constables, who were on patrol duty, but he denies having abused or threatened them, and states no civilians were within hearing. The Inspector-General is inquiring into the matter and will take any disciplinary action that may be necessary. About three years ago a sergeant complained that the head constable had reprimanded him in public, but the latter subsequently expressed regret at having unintentionally hurt the sergeant's feelings and the matter ended. The head constable was not reprimanded. The proportion of Catholics in the entire force is about 75 per cent., so that there is nothing exceptional at Ballyshannon in this respect. The Inspector-General does not propose to remove the head constable from this station so long as he performs his duties satisfactorily.

Blennerhasset Estate, Kerry.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received from Mr. Thomas O'Connor, of Camp, county Kerry, an application for reinstatement to his farm on the Blennerhasset estate, Ballyseedy; whether these lands have been in the possession of his family since 1853; and what action is to be taken in the matter.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have not received from Thomas O'Connor an application for reinstatement as an evicted tenant. They have received from him a copy of a letter sent by him to a newspaper, but this does not contain sufficient information to enable the Commissioners to inquire into the matter. They have, therefore, furnished him with a form upon which he may make an application if he so desires. Upon its receipt, the Commissioners will inquire into the case in due course.

Irish Land—Originating Requests.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of estates in which originating requests under Section 6 of the Land Purchase Act of 1903, were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in each of the years ending March 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907; and how many estates, with the names of them, in which originating requests lodged in the year ending March, 1905, have not yet been dealt with, as well as the cause of the delay.

MR. BIRRELL: The number of originating requests under Section 6 of the Land Act of 1903, lodged with the Estates Commissioners was, in the year ending March 1904, twenty-one; 1905, eighty-three; 1906, seventy-three; and 1907, ninety-one. Out of the eighty-three estates as to which requests were lodged in 1905, fifteen cases remain in which the formal agreement for purchase has not yet been completed. These cases will be closed as soon as the statutory requirements as to title and resale have been complied with. The Commissioners are dealing with all of these cases as rapidly as possible, and they do not think that anything would be gained by giving in answer to a Question the names of the particular estates in which delay has occurred or entering into the causes of delay in each particular case.

Sir R. Hudson's Cavan Estate.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why the EstatesCommissioners have decided not to take any action in the cases of the evicted tenants, Patrick Carolon, William King, and Catherine Carolon, all on the estate of Sir R. Hudson, E. 1313/8, county Cavan; and will he have these cases further investigated, or state in what respects the claims of Jane Beck and Hugh Foreman differed from the three evicted tenants named above.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners fully investigated the claims of the five evicted tenants named in the Question. On the cases of the three first mentioned, they decided, upon full consideration of all the circumstances, to take no action, and they do not intend to have the cases further investigated. In the other two cases they decided to find holdings for the applicants if possible. The Commissioners do not think it desirable to enter into a comparison of the merits of the different cases.

Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state when the Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1901 with respect to the pay and conditions of service of the Royal Irish Constabulary will be introduced; whether any provision has been made in the Estimates for the next financial year for the increased expenditure; and whether he will state how many years have elapsed since the members of this force were granted an increase in their annual pay.

MR. BIRRELL: The Bill in question will be introduced at the earliest opportunity, but I am not at present in a position to fix a date. It would be quite irregular to anticipate the decision of Parliament by making provision for the increased expenditure in the coming Estimates. The pay of the force was last increased by the Constabulary Act of 1883.

Irish Congested Districts Board Fund.

MR. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Boards use public funds for the relief of unemployment; whether these funds are raised locally or imperially; whether these boards have any and, if so, what representative element; and how much money was disbursed by the Boards in the last financial year, altogether and in respect of those services which might reasonably be said to be in relief of unemployment.

MR. BIRRELL: The Congested Districts Board hold that their funds cannot be applied to the relief of temporary distress, and they have always acted upon this principle. The Board's funds are derived partly from the Irish Church surplus and partly from the annual votes of Parliament. The member of the Board other than *ex-officio* members are nominated by the Crown; none are elected. The total expenditure of the Board in 1906–7 was £341,581, details of which will be found in the Annual Report presented to Parliament.

Harlech Estate, Sligo.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the farm of Leitrim Hill, situate near Tubbercurry, in the county of Sligo, and forming portion of the Harlech estate, recently sold to the tenants under the Act of 1903, is still in the possession of Mr. Charles Phibbs, J.P., an extensive landlord and grazier, who uses it as a grazing ranch; and whether, seeing that this farm is much required for the enlargement of the small holdings surrouning it, and that Mr. Phibbs, who owns estates and farms in other counties, has expressed his willing to give up Leitrim Hill on being paid compensation, steps will be taken by the Estates Commissioners to have this farm taken over for the relief of congestion in the district?

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have already made inquiries regarding the farm in question, and have ascertained that it does not now form part of Lord Harlech estate, but is the property in fee simple of Mr. Phibbs, who purchased it from the late Lord Harlech some years ago, and who does not now desire to dispose of it.

MR. O'DOWD: Is not this grazing land situated in the centre of the congested portion of this estate, and did not Mr. Phibbs tell a deputation who waited on him that he was willing to surrender the farm?

MR. BIRRELL: The Estate Commissioners inform me that he does not desire to dispose of it. I will inquire further.

Medical Inspection of Irish School Children.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a statement recently made by the President of the Board of Education to the effect that the Education Department were prepared to recommend to the Treasury that provision should be made in the coming financial year for the medical inspection of children attending schools, and that this provision should be made in the form of a special grant; and whether he intends to take steps to have a similar procedure followed and a similar grant made in connection with medical inspection of schools in Ireland, and more especially with regard to the medical inspection of the eyesight of children.

MR. BIRRELL: My right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education informs me that the newspaper report to which the hon. Gentleman evidently refers contains a very material mistake. My right hon. friend did not say that he was prepared to make the recommendation in question to the Treasury. What he said was that he was asked to make that recommendation; and the sense of his reply is shown in a subsequent passage of his speech in which he asked the deputation not to press him to go to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the ensuing year, for in the first place he thought it would be a mistake to introduce any special grant at a moment when they were anxious to get rid of special grants, and secondly he feared that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not be able to meet their demands at present, having regard to the existing claims that were made upon him.

MR. JOHN REDMOND asked whether the National Board had taken any steps in regard to the medical inspection of children, especially with reference to their eyesight. Could not the right hon. Gentleman induce them to take some steps in that direction?

MR. BIRRELL: I believe they are very anxious on this subject, but I will take care that their attention is specially called to it.

Land Purchase at Aghatubrid.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that by agreement between the late Mr. J. W. Leahy and his tenants at Aghatubrid, near Cahirciveen, the purchase price of the estate was left to the Estates Commissioners; can he say when the Commissioners conveyed to the agent the terms on which the purchase was to be carried out; whether he is aware that processes have now been served on all the tenants for the Killarney sessions to be held on the 4th of April; whether, in view of the fact that the tenants have fulfilled their side of the bargain, he will state why the delay has been caused; and will he take steps to secure the withdrawal of these processes.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are aware of the agreement between the late Mr. Leahy and his tenants which is referred to in the Question. The Commissioners furnished, on 1st June, 1907, a preliminary estimate of price to the owner, who died in September following. In November, 1907, the attention of the Commissioners was directed to the fact that processes were being issued against the tenants by the new agent and they thereupon forwarded to him a copy of a letter which they had previously written to the late owner, intimating the price they were prepared to advance; and at the same time they furnished him with a copy of the agreement entered into between the late owner and the tenants in which the owner agreed to wipe out all arrears. The Commissioners are not at present in a position to make a formal offer to purchase the property, as the title of the present owner has not yet been proved. They cannot exercise any control as regards proceedings for the recovery of rent.

Whaling Stations on Irish Coasts.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the prohibition of the establishment of whale-fishing stations in county Donegal in consequence of the evidence as to its disastrous effects upon other fisheries in Norway and in Shetland given at the recent inquiry by the Irish fishery inspectors in Londonderry, the Government will for the same reason prohibit the establishment of any whale-fishing station on any part of the coasts of Ireland.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): As my hon. friend is aware, a proposal was recently made to establish a whale-fishing station off the coast of Donegal, in the immediate neighbourhood of an extensive fishing industry. After holding an inquiry, the Department issued a bye-law prohibiting the station being established. But there are parts of the Irish coast where no fishing industry exists, and I think the proper method of dealing with the matter is by legislation, under which the Department will be enabled to license the industry where it can be carried on without injury, and to exercise a veto where the circumstances appear to demand it.

MR. MORTON: Do I understand the hon. Gentleman to say it cannot be done without legislation?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I do not think it can.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the whaling industry is calculated to injure the whole fishing industry, not merely in the particular locality of the station, but 200 or 300 miles off.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I am acting on the advice of experts in this matter.

Finance.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can see his way to laying upon the Table of the House before the close of the financial year, or soon after, a Memorandum in a form similar to the Civil Service Estimates, showing what is the estimated expenditure under the head of Other Consolidated Fund Services and payments to Local Taxation Accounts for the coming year; and, if so, whether he will include in that Memorandum a table showing how the expenditure upon the various items appearing on pages 43 to 69 of the Finance Accounts for 1906–7 compares with the estimated expenditure upon the same items in the years 1907–8 and 1908–9.

MR. ASQUITH: The charges under the head of "Other Consolidated Fund Services" are set out in full detail in the published Finance Accounts, of which they occupy twenty-seven pages. The great bulk of these charges consists of salaries, pensions, and other fixed allowances, all under statute, in which only slight variations occur from year to year through deaths and retirements, which cannot be foreseen. Occasionally, variations of a more important character may occur among the few items classed as "Miscellaneous Services" on page 69. In these circumstances, there does not appear to be any justification for incurring the expense of publishing a detailed estimate of Consolidated Fund Services in addition to the detailed account of the issue. The usual Financial Statement will be circulated on the introduction of the Budget, showing the issues made in 1907–8 for Consolidated Fund Services, including the National Debt Service and the payments to the Local Taxation Accounts, with Estimates under the same heads for the ensuing year. The local taxation payments are dependent to some extent on the Revenue receipts, so they could not be published beforehand without forestalling the Budget.

Scottish Education Bill.

MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government intend to proceed with an Education Bill for Scotland, and, if so, when would it be introduced.

MR. ASQUITH: It will be introduced to-morrow under the ten minutes rule.

LAW OF DISTRESS AMENDMENT BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 101.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 101.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 175.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Lotteries and Advertisements—That they concur with the Commons in the Resolution of this House communicated to them on Monday last, "That it is expedient that a Select Committee of Five Members of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of an equal number of Lords to consider and inquire into the law (1) as to lotteries, including the sale of lottery bonds, competitions for prizes which involve an element of chance, and advertisements relating thereto; (2) as to indecent literature and pictures and advertisements relating to things indecent and immoral; and to report what amendments, if any, in the law are necessary or desirable," as desired by this House.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Henry Cubitt Gooch, esquire, for the Borough of Camberwell (Peckham Division).

The hon. Member was received with cheers from the Unionist side of the House, which the Ministerialists answered with cries of "Beer, beer."

*MR. W. JOHNSON (Warwickshire, Nuneaton): All total abstainers give a cheer!

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I ask your ruling whether it is in order for any Member of this House to greet a new Member with offensive epithets?

*MR. SPEAKER: Certainly not; they did not reach my ears, or I should have intervened.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) [EXPENSES].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of Salaries, and remuneration, and of any expenses that may be incurred in pursuance of any act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884 (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

NEW BILLS.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS BILL.

"To amend the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876," presented by Mr. George Greenwood; supported by Sir Francis Channing, Mr. MacNeill, Mr. Crooks, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Luttrell, Mr. John Robertson, Mr. Winfrey, and Mr. Mansfield; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 176.]

BALLOT (TRANSFERABLE VOTE) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Votes at Parliamentary Elections," presented by Mr. Dundas White; supported by Mr. Cleland, Mr. Boulton, Mr. Findlay, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Watt, Mr. Arnold Herbert, and Mr. Smeaton; to be read a second time upon Friday 15th May, and to be printed. [Bill 177.]

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 2—

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool), moved to omit the clause in order to draw attention to the extremely complex and intricate form in which the Bill was submitted to the House, and in consequence of the great difficulty which a private soldier had in knowing exactly what penalties he was liable to when he enlisted and also during the time that he was serving. This question had been raised before in the House several times, and he thought in 1905 it was raised in a concrete form by the hon. Gentleman who now occupied the position of Under-Secretary for India, who pointed out how hard it was for a private soldier to know what he might or might not do, and what the penalties were, and he had the support of many hon. Members then on the Opposition side of the House. In fact, he had the support of two present Cabinet Ministers, the President of the Board of Education and the President of the Board of Trade. The Under-Secretary for the Colonies also joined his colleagues in impressing upon the then Secretary for War that something should be done. It was impossible in the Army regulations to find out exactly what had to be done. He had spent some hours that morning in wading through the Army regulations, and he could find no mention in them of any rules laid down by the War Office to the effect that copies of the Army Act should be available for private soldiers. It was known that copies were kept in the orderly room, but that was the last place a private soldier was likely to go to voluntarily. He was not asking the War Office to do anything but what other Government Departments did. In the Coal Mines Regulation Act they had it laid down that the scale of fines and things of that sort should be readily accessible to the workers, and he therefore asked the right hon. Gentleman to tell them how the private soldier could easily find out what the penalties were, and if no advance had been made on the position in 1907, whether he would see his way, as he was sure he would, to make things as easy as possible.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington) said he had great sympathy with the wishes of the hon. Member, and it was a question which had also been raised in Questions put down by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean. The difficulty was that the Army Act consisted of 190 sections, and covered an immense ground. To condense the Army Act as such would be impossible, and it would be no good to the private soldier to give the whole of it. It was desirable, therefore, if they could, to put him in possession of it in a form which he could understand, and they had got a plan for so doing. He did not know whether the hon. Member, who took so close an interest in these things, had seen "The Soldiers' Small Book," which was given to every soldier on his joining his corps. The purpose of the book was two-fold. It was a sort of pocket book, in which he put certain entries relating to his name, place and date of enlistment, and so on, but there was something more to the point. The principal object for which the soldier was required to be in possession of this book was that he should be provided, among other things, with certain information which he would find useful to him during his service. One of the first things in it was this, "Notes from the Army Act," which set out in popular language a summary of the first forty-four sections, which closely concerned the private soldier, and it gave him a good deal of information besides. For instance, he thought the whole of the penalties were explained in clear and popular language, and that was more convenient to the soldier than supplying him with a copy of the 190 clauses of the Act. But that did not touch the point as to the inconvenience of the form of the Army Act. It was quite true that it was inconvenient. The Army Act had no right to be enforced for more than a year, and therefore every year they had to bring in this very peculiar Bill, and the Act was given vitality every year by a short clause and the necessary amendments desired to be made. In the Army Act dating back eighteen years, it enacted that it should be reprinted every year with emendations. The Act was not put in the Statute Book, because that was already a fat book—during the life of this Parliament it had been a very fat book—and it would be very inconvenient to put in the whole Act, but what they did was that the King's printer, acting under the provisions of the section, reprinted the Army Act as it had been altered, and the result was the big volume which he had in his hand, and which could be got for a few pence. It was a cheap form which anybody could get. They were preparing a convenient volume for the Territorial Force which would contain all the regulations put together. They were also preparing regulations in the same form for the Special Reserve, and he would see what could be done in the way of preparing the other regulations in a handy form. The King's Regulations had actually been reprinted, and he thought that the new edition of them would be completely distributed in a fortnight or three weeks. The new edition would have to supersede the old editions. It was so long since the last edition came out that they thought it worth while to meet the reasonable complaints that had been made and prepare a special edition.

MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) thought the Secretary of State for War might very well see whether some method other than that of the soldiers' pocket book might not be adopted of bringing penalties and fines incurred more closely into the purview of the private soldier. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his proposition that a similar pocket book ought to be issued for the Territorial Army, as he thought that something of the kind was very necessary. They had been so alarmed and so disorganised recently, that what they wanted was to let the men know exactly what they had to do, and he was sure there was nothing which would tend more to that desirable end than the proposition which the right hon. Gentleman had made. He hoped the new pocket book would be issued without any undue delay.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he wanted to draw the attention of the Secretary of State for War to a point which he thought would cause a great deal of difficulty in future unless the Army Annual Act of the year was made a little more extensive, for as far as he could make out, from a legal point of view, the Act would not apply in any shape or form to the Territorial Force. Running all through the Act was found the expression "Auxiliary Forces," which was defined as meaning the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers.

MR. HALDANE said that that was being altered. The Militia were still under training in their old form, and so they could not alter it in the Bill, but they would see that later on the words were put right. If the hon. Member would look at Section 175 he would see that the Territorial Force was referred to, and as they got the whole thing complete the wording of the Act would be brought up to date.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said he wanted to refer to an important statement made by the right hon. Gentleman about the Territorial Army. He had announced that he was going to bring out a pocket book dealing with functions and duties and so on. There had been a good deal of anxiety in the last few weeks about the attestation form for the new Territorial Army, and he hoped the new pocket book would be an exact, precise, and authentic account of what the liabilities and engagements of the Territorial soldier were. Six weeks ago hon. Members interested in Volunteer questions were caused great anxiety by the Territorial attestation form, but that form was withdrawn and a new one substituted, and there were certain differences in those two forms. Instead of saying "You are required to attend at such and such a place," the revised form said "Please attend," and so on, but what he wanted to point out was that in the original attestation form there was nothing inconsistent with the Territorial Act as passed last year; it might be said to be the logical and mathematical deduction of the Act of last year. But that had been revised, and all sort of things had been cut out of the new form. He thought that was very wrong indeed. It did not set forth upon the face of it the full liabilities and responsibilities of the Volunteers. If it was necessary from the provisions of the Act of last year to state that a certain series of questions, if untruly answered, involved imprisonment with hard labour, he considered that the War Office was unjustified in having suppressed that fact in the new form.

MR. HALDANE: It is called "heavy punishment" instead.

LORD BALCARRES said that that was not the same thing as imprisonment with hard labour, and if that was the penalty—and there could be no question about it—then it ought to be clearly stated on the attestation form. The attestation form which was being handed to the Volunteers did not state the material facts. He himself strongly disapproved of the old attestation form, but it was perfectly accurate. He would not dream of blaming the right hon. Gentleman nor the officials, who had followed the Act with meticulous accuracy, and it was not the fault of the War Office if the attestation form was impossible. It was the fault of that House, and the hasty and hurried way in which they had rushed the Bill through last year, under the guillotine.

MR. HALDANE said the attestation form followed exactly the form which was adopted by the late Government for the Yeomanry Force.

LORD BALCARRES said the matter would not be passed over by a reference to predecessors. The fault, if it lay anywhere, lay with the House. He did not wish to labour the point beyond drawing attention to the fact that the attestation form did not accurately and fully set out the state of affairs. He sincerely trusted that the pocket-book would contain things which would be stated completely and with legal accuracy.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said that what the noble Lord had stated might cause alarm and dismay in connection with the Territorial system which they were now considering. Might he be permitted to say that he was closely familiar with all the different forms, as he knew the noble Lord was also; but speaking with all respect to him, he really thought that the noble Lord was in error in supposing that any material fact was passed over in the new attestation form. It followed in every respect, as his right hon. friend had stated, what was called the Yeomanry form, which had been used by the Yeomanry for the last two or three years. He had never heard of any man, and he supposed there were 100,000 men in that force, who thought that insufficient information was given to him in the attestation form. The difference between the old and new forms was this. Whereas under the old one it was said: "Do you wish to join the Territorial Force? If you do it will be at your peril," under the new form, the words were more civil and more accurate, owing to the fact that it was drawn up by persons more conversant with the Territorial Army. He could not see how the noble Lord could say that the new form was deceptive. The liabilities of the Volunteer were most clearly stated, and with the solitary exception that "heavy punishment" had been substitute for "hard labour," he did not know of any alteration. Whereas under the old form they said to a man: "If you want to become a Territorial soldier, look out," under the new form they invited people if they could spare the time to become members of the Territorial Army, and they knew plainly what their liabilities were.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 3:

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. ASHLEY moved to omit the clause for the purpose of calling attention to the prices for billeting put in the schedule. The prices agreed upon last year were not excessive or generous, but since then another state of things had arisen, and they might have to alter altogether the scale of taxation which was to be placed upon the licence holder, and also the scale of compensation which he was to be paid if his house was taken away. If the House chose to alter the amount of money a licence holder had to pay to carry on his business, then surely they ought to raise the scale under the Schedule. Therefore, he moved to leave out the clause in order to hear what the right hon. Gentleman had to say.

MR. HALDANE said the hon. Member had raised a very great question which they would be debating, he had no doubt, at very great length in a very short time from now. The question was whether the holder of the licence would be worse off than he was at present. The licence holder was not the owner of the premises, and whether he would be worse off was a question about which hon. Members would hear a great deal from that side of the House. He was afraid he would not be in order if he were to express his sentiments on the subject of the Amendment. He would only say that the Schedule was considered the year before last, and the alterations embodied last year, it was substantially agreed, were as right and just as they could make them.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 208; Noes, 64. (Division List, No. 51.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.

Lord Balcarres.

Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Black, Arthur W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon .Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras,E.
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Menzies, Walter
Montagu, E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,T.F. (Wolvesh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Rt. Hn. E.(Dundee)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel,Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann,Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton underLyne
Sears, J. E.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt.Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas,Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas,David Alfred (M'rthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walsh, Stephen
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F.
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster,Rt.Hn.Hugh O.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George

Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Collings,Rt.Hn.J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Cross, Alexander
Dixon-Hartland,SirFred Dixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gooch,Henry Cubitt (Peckham
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hill, Sir Clement
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway,Rt.Hn. Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon.Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wilson,A.Stanley (York, E. R.)
Winterton, Earl
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Ashley and Captain Craig.

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

MR. ASHLEY said he wished to move a new clause dealing with special enlistments. He was very strongly of opinion and he thought most hon. Members would be so too, that it was not advisable, certainly in our Regular forces, that any man should be enlisted except under very special circumstances, who was less than eighteen years of age. The regulations laid down that no man might be sent to India who was less than twenty years of age, and it was not likely in case of invasion that men between eighteen and twenty would have had sufficient training or be of sufficient physique to repel an invasion. Therefore it came to this, that if they enlisted a man under eighteen years of age, unless he was exceptionally strong they might have him on their hands for two years at least. They had had it laid down by the Secretary of State for War that he proposed in the Special Reserve to enlist men at seventeen. His Amendment aimed at putting an end to such a state of things as that. It aimed at compelling the War Office authorities not to enlist any man of seventeen for the Special Reserve, but to put that force on exactly the same footing as the Regular Army. Because after all men who were enlisted in the Special Reserve were to be used, according to the right hon. Gentleman's statement, for exactly the same purpose as the Regular Army. They were going to be used in case of war to expand the ranks of the Regular battalions which were depleted through men having been left behind owing to sickness or insufficient physique, to expand battalions which might be decimated or brought down very considerably in their strength owing to losses at the front, through disease or casualties, and they might also be sent abroad in their units. Therefore, it seemed to him that it was a waste of public money to enlist men of seventeen for the Special Reserves, when it was considered that eighteen was a sufficiently low age for the enlistment of men for the Regular Army. He had, therefore, two objects in introducing the clause, first of all to ensure that a man should under no circumstances be enlisted for the infantry of the Line or for the Guards, unless he was eighteen years of age, or unless there were some very special circumstances coming within the provisions in the clause, and secondly, that the Special Reserve should not consist in the future as it had in the past—because the Special Reserve was the old Militia—to a considerable extent of boys even less than seventeen years of age, who, by the very terms of the War Office regulations, could not be sent to India for at least three years and would therefore be costing the country money when they could not possibly be of any use in case of a serious war in India or any of the Colonies. As to the difficulty of carrying this clause into effect if it was enacted, he would draw the attention of the House to a question put by the hon. Member for Aberdeen in 1903 to Lord Stanley. The hon. Member asked—

"Whether, with a view to securing that no man shall now be enlisted under the age of eighteen years he will consider the advisability of amending the attestation paper by placing before the recruit his liability to punishment for a false answer as to ages, of carrying into practice Sections 33, 34, and 99 of the Army Act and of the addition of a question asking for an opinion as to age, to Army Forms B. 64 and 97, as well as forwarding these forms whenever practicable to the school board under whom the recruit was schooled."

Lord Stanley answered—

"I am desired by my right hon. friend to say that as regards the liability to punishment his legal advisers inform him that conviction for making a false statement as to age cannot be held good unless the man pleads guilty, or the prosecution proves that he knew his correct age, a man's actual age not being a matter within his personal knowledge."

That went to support his belief that it was no use asking a man what his age was, because, if he gave a false answer, he could not be punished for it. But this new clause would place his age practically beyond doubt, because he would produce a birth certificate, or the officer would take such stringent measures that there would be no reasonable doubt about it.

New Clause—

"(1) Subject to the provisions of this section no recruit shall, after the passing of this Act, be enlisted in the Regular Forces unless he can produce a certificate of his birth to the recruiter, nor unless he is eighteen years of age.

"(2) A recruit may be enlisted without the previous production of his birth certificate if the approving officer shall be satisfied that every reasonable effort had been made to obtain such certificate, and that it is not practicable to obtain it, but in that case such officer shall state in writing what steps have been taken to obtain such certificate, and why he is of opinion that it is impracticable to obtain it.

"(3) A recruit may be enlisted who is known or believed by the approving officer to be more than seventeen, but less than eighteen years of age, if such approving officer shall be of opinion that, by reason of exceptional physical health and development, such recruit will make an efficient soldier; but in that case such officer shall state in writing the height, weight, and chest measurement of such recruit, and any other circumstance which shall appear to such officer to justify the enlistment of such recruit. Every written statement made by an approving officer in pursuance of this section shall be transmitted to the Secretary of State, and a return of all such statements made in any year shall be laid before Parliament not later than the presentation of the annual Army Estimates to the House of Commons in the year following."—(*Mr. Ashley*).

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said the clause, though highly technical struck one as being very reasonable. The whole policy of the Government and the Secretary of State for War was to go in for a small Army, but he trusted a very efficient one. He was not sufficiently expert himself, but he would listen with interest to his colleagues who knew far more about the subject than he did, though it seemed to him that anyone under the age of eighteen could hardly be a very efficient soldier. Hon. Members opposite were all in favour of a time limit upon other questions, and he thought an age limit of eighteen in this case was a very fair proposal indeed. The subject was one of such importance that he was almost disposed to appeal to the Secretary of State for War as to whether he would not adjourn the further discussion. The Government had a number of measures they intended to bring before the House, but they did not seem in any pressing hurry to urge them on. The House had adjourned again and again at a very early hour during the past few weeks, and night after night had been wasted, and he thought it would be better, in view of the vital effect this new clause might have on the constitution of the ideal Army which the Secretary for War was bent upon constituting, if he would agree to adjourn the further discussion of the clause until a later date when they might have the advantage of expert opinion upon it.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Does the hon. Member object to the limit in the new clause of seventeen years in exceptional cases?

MR. T. L. CORBETT said the hon. Member had evidently grasped the clause in a way he could hardly profess to have done. He understood this was to prevent any young man under the age of eighteen from being recruited.

He moved to report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said the clause was a very good one when it was originally moved. There had been an immense change in recruiting for the Army during the last few years and what was contained in the clause had been practically carried out. When a great change was going on in the Army they should be careful to make as little difference in the conditions of recruiting as possible, and they wished the recruits to understand that they would be expected to do practically what they did before. They wanted to make the recruits who came up for enlistment feel that there had been no alteration from the old conditions. He was aware there had been some very slight alterations, but that was the feeling they wanted to maintain. If they inserted fresh clauses of this kind the men would think they were enlisting for quite a different purpose, and that was exactly what they wished to avoid. An alteration like the one suggested in the clause was bad both for recruiting and for the very objects it was brought forward to support.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) did not think altering the age would have the effect contemplated by the hon. Member for Lichfield. He did not, however, think the clause was a desirable one, because if they limited the recruits to those over eighteen they would be striking a serious blow at recruiting in general without gaining anything whatever. By insisting upon a birth certificate they would be imposing an irksome and difficult condition in regard to which it would be very difficult to get accurate information. He did not see that the certificate was at all necessary, because there was no special virtue in the exact age of eighteen or seventeen years. That age was adopted as the age at which the average young man was considered fit to begin soldiering. Some of them were fit a year earlier and some a year later than others. There were to-day many young fellows of sixteen years of age fit to start life as soldiers whilst others at eighteen or nineteen years of age might be quite unfit. Therefore there was no special virtue in an exact age, and he did not think anything would be gained by insisting upon the production of the birth certificates except in the case of service in tropical climates, in places such as India. He would be sorry if the House adopted this clause because he believed it would strike a really severe blow at recruiting.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he had listened with surprise to the arguments of the hon. Member opposite, because they seemed to him to have nothing whatever to do with the question before the House. The new clause provided that "No recruit shall be enlisted in the Regular Forces." Therefore, the great change referred to by the hon. Member for Lichfield could not be in the Regular Army at all, but in the Territorial Forces. [Cries of "No."] He always understood that Regular Forces meant Regular Forces and those forces were not altered. Therefore there was no change going on in the Regular Army to which this clause applied. His hon. friend had said that the clause might have a bad effect on recruiting because the age limit would be no advantage. Did the Secretary of State for War agree that a recruit at eighteen did not do better than one at seventeen?

MR. HALDANE said he would have been disposed to agree with that, but the hon. Baronet voted against that clause last year and that had shaken his judgment.

SIR F. BANBURY: Surely the right hon. Gentleman did not think that he ought to be obstinate in his opinions when the conditions changed. Because he had once done a thing it did not follow that he should adhere to it. The right hon. Gentleman had not answered his question. His view was that a young man of eighteen was for the purposes of soldiering better than the same young man at seventeen. His hon. friend had said there would be a difficulty about getting the birth certificate, but that condition appeared to be modified, because further on in the clause it was provided that a recruit might be enlisted if the recruiting officer was of opinion that physically such recruit would make an efficient soldier. They did not care whether the recruit was seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen, if he was well developed and strong physically. Therefore subsection 3 of the new clause met the objection raised by his hon. friend. The Secretary of State for War not long ago stated in reply to a question by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean that recruiting was never better than it was now. If so, there could not be any objection to this clause. In 1905 the Unionist Government were desirous of having a large and efficient Army, and it was found necessary to get as many recruits as possible. In order to accomplish that it was considered advisable not to have the age too high. At the present moment, however, they had a smaller Army because they had reduced the Regulars by 20,000 men. If the Army had been reduced they ought not to have the same difficulty in regard to recruiting as with a large Army. It was claimed that by making the Army smaller they made it more efficient. That being so, he intended to vote for the clause proposed by his hon. friend. He would be very glad if any hon. Gentleman opposite would show him where he was wrong. His own contention was that if the Army was reduced, it was not necessary to take such a large number of recruits. He hoped his hon. friend would go to a division.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said the arguments of his hon. friend had not converted him to the support of this clause. It was not the first occasion on which the clause had been moved. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean and the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool in past years had been amongst its strongest supporters. He himself was still open to conviction on the subject, and if those hon. Gentlemen could adduce arguments to convince him he would be prepared to reconsider his opinion. He rose to put a specific point to the Secretary of State for War. It arose out of some remarks of his hon. friend, in regard to the age at which men were sent to India. The practice was not to send them to India under the age of twenty. That was true in regard to men, but boys were sent to India under that age. Whether or not there was a physical disadvantage in that was an open question. There was evidence both for and against the practice. There was a strong body of evidence that boys sent out did not suffer the same physical disadvantages as young recruits did. There had recently been brought to his notice a case of considerable hardship which had arisen under the existing state of affairs—the case of boys enlisting from the Duke of York's School or the Royal Hibernian Academy who happened to enlist in a regiment at the time in India. They discovered that in spite of the existing regulations in regard to boys not being sent under twenty they were liable to be sent at once. What had been put to him was that, at all events, the War Office should take some steps to warn the parents or guardians that if the boys did enlist in a regiment which was in India they would incur this liability. At present no such warning was given.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said the point raised by the hon. Gentleman was a very exceptional one for the reason that the Government of India would not receive the boys. They held strong views on the subject. He wanted to know when the House would be in possession of the Recruiting Report.

*Mr. HALDANE said the Recruiting Report would be ready in a few days. Comparatively few boys were sent out to India. The officers were instructed to tell the parents that the regiment was going to India, and if there was any objection that was the time to state it. The Government had considered the matter with the medical authorities and with the Government of India. He would inquire as to whether anything further could be done. He thought this debate had been conducted on a misapprehension. He agreed with the hon. Baronet opposite that the new clause had nothing to do with the Special Reserve. If the Committee had seen the clause, somebody would have drawn attention to section 190, sub-section 8 of the Army Act. In that sub-section the expression "Regular Forces" was defined as including only those who are "presently under obligation to proceed abroad."

The Special Reserve was not presently under that obligation; it only came under that obligation on mobilisation. Therefore the Special Reserve was excluded by the Army Act from forming part of the Regular Forces of the Crown. When they came to that conclusion the controversy assumed a different complexion, because the motion of the hon. Member, which ought to be carefully considered, was to allow under certain circumstances recruiting for the Regular Forces at an age less than eighteen. They might encourage enlistment at a lower age than eighteen in the case of the Militia and the Special Reserve for the reason that it was a good thing for a young man of seventeen to get six months training; but they did not allow it in the case of Regulars. Moreover, they had instructed the recruiting officers to use their discretion in asking for birth certificates. In many cases they could not get the birth certificates, and if they tried to enforce their production they would lose the recruit. In those cases the officers were asked to use their own judgment, as to the age of the recruit. He was in sympathy with the hon. Baronet's old view on this matter, and he doubted whether he had good reasons for altering his attitude. He was certainly entitled to show that as things had improved, and as the number of soldiers became less, fewer recruits were required. But it was not the case necessarily that because the number of men was smaller a smaller number of recruits was required. They might have the three years system still in operation. In that case the men passed away from the establishment of the battalion into the Reserve more rapidly than they would under a longer system, and they might require more recruits, although there were fewer men. They had still the three years' system in operation. It was not even at its worst; it would be at its worst this year, and then there would be a gradual improvement. Fortunately, recruiting at this moment was very good. The step proposed in this clause should not be taken without careful consideration, and he thought that if it had been realised that the clause did not touch the Special Reserve it would not have received so much support.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said that the debate was very interesting, not only on account of the speech of the Secretary of State for War, but also because of the speeches of other hon. Gentlemen. Those who cared to look into what had passed in Parliament in recent years would find that they had reached an interesting juncture. He gathered that the Secretary of State opposed the clause. He would like to get an explanation why a number of the members of the Government had made a complete *volte face* on the subject. The first right hon. Gentleman who had changed his opinion and had given no reason for doing so was no less a personage than the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On 2nd April, 1903, the right hon. Gentleman supported this very clause when it was moved by the hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool. Other Members of the present Government who supported the clause were the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury and the hon. Member for Halifax. He thought that not only the House of Commons but the country was entitled to know why, when our Army organisation was more or less being put in the melting pot, members of the Government had given no explanation of so complete a change of opinion on so vital a matter. He thought the Secretary for War should tell the Committee whether during the time he was responsible for the Army he had been unable to obtain sufficient recruits. Everybody inside and outside the House of Commons had heard for years reproaches that many of the recruits for the Army were immature youths, and that the Government should not enlist such youths to undertake the arduous work of a soldier. He did not think it proper that responsible Ministers of the Crown should completely change their opinion without offering a word of explanation to the House of Commons; and nothing had fallen from the Secretary for War which could be held to be a good excuse for this extraordinary change in their action.

COLONEL SEELY said he was still very much of the same opinon as he was in 1903, viz., that no man should be enlisted in the Regular Army under the age of eighteen years; and that in all reasonable and practical circumstances a birth certificate should be obtained. The hon. Member would remember that, in conjunction with Lord Hugh Cecil, a long and arduous fight was engaged in on this matter, and that they finally compromised with the then Secretary for War, to put in certain words in the clause enabling the Government to enlist youths under particular circumstances at the age of seventeen. They understood that that would be accepted, but unfortunately, there was a misunderstanding and Lord Hugh Cecil was very angry because the words were not inserted. The clause now contained a provision that under regulation the recruiting officers should under certain circumstances enlist youths at the age of seventeen; but that the men were not to be enlisted as a rule for the Regular Army under the age of eighteen and that a birth certificate was to be obtained if possible. He thought he was right in saying that by passing the clause proposed by the hon. and gallant Member they would lose part of the ground which they already occupied, because they would open the door for recruiting men at a lower age than now. If that were so, he would unhesitatingly vote against the clause which would undo part of the work in which he had taken a humble part in getting rid of the possibility of enlisting boys of sixteen and seventeen years of age.

CAPTAIN **FABER** (Hampshire, Andover) said he associated himself with what had fallen from his hon. and gallant friend near him, but not quite on the same grounds. He did not disapprove of recruits being taken at the age of seventeen, for he would like to see every boy in the country have military training, and the earlier they came into the Army the sooner they would learn their exercises, and the sooner would their physique be improved. He would be very glad to hear from the Secretary for War whether he thought the part of the clause referring to the production of a birth certificate would or would not be a dead letter. He thought that that part of the clause should be left out, because he could not see how men of that class who joined the Army could at the age of eighteen produce a birth certificate; and to insist upon it he believed would hurt recruiting.

CAPTAIN **CRAIG** (Down, E.) said that the Secretary for War ought to have made an effort to circulate the Reports on recruiting before this Bill came on for discussion. The hon. and gallant Member for Abercromby had that day performed one of the somersaults with which they were getting familiar on the Radical benches. He thought the hon. and gallant Member ought to have stood up manfully for an Amendment which he himself had proposed in an impassioned speech in 1903, when Member for the Isle of Wight. Now the hon. and gallant Gentleman, when Member for Abercromby Division of Liverpool, confessed his error and said that he was formerly entirely wrong. He did not think that the hon. and gallant Gentleman's remarks could bear any great weight. The Mover of the Amendment had made a statement in its support which fell something short of what should have been said in order to impress on the Secretary for War the importance of putting into actual words which the right hon. Gentleman admitted should be in the Army Annual Act. Nobody for a moment believed that the clause as it stood would carry out to the letter what his hon. and gallant friend wanted. What objection had the Secretary for War to put into the Army Annual Act that which would give great satisfaction on that side of the House and would not hurt recruiting? Hon. Members opposite did not take any interest in the Army except to move a reduction of 10,000 men on economical grounds. But surely it would be economising to adopt this Resolution. Instead of having recruiting under the age which the Secretary for War and his advisers thought was the proper age for recruits for service abroad, it would secure that only good men were put on the strength of the Army. The Secretary for War had shown very good grounds for accepting the Amendment, and during nine-tenths of his speech he thought the right hon. Gentleman intended to accept the clause moved by his hon. and gallant friend and embody it in the Bill. But at the last moment the right hon. Gentleman jumped the traces and went the other way. A very valuable column had been added to the recruiting Returns, which said that the Secretary for War would have to lay on the Table of the House a return of the number of men recruited under the age of eighteen. At present the returns did not show how many of that age were recruited to the strength of the Regular Army, and the information would be invaluable. The fact remained that they were living in a fool's paradise so far as the young recruits were concerned, because up till now no returns had been presented to the House showing how many young men under the prescribed age had been actually recruited. If the clause now suggested were passed that information would be readily obtainable by every Member of the House, and he thought they were discussing the matter very much in the dark in not knowing definitely what the number of these men was. He would therefore ask the Secretary of State for War if he had any information to give them, or could let them have an approximate idea of how many men were affected by matters standing as they were. Surely when a new clause of this sort was moved it would be worth the while of some of the numerous advisers which the right hon. Gentleman had at his command to give him a rough estimate of how many men were recorded as being enlisted under the age of eighteen under special circumstances. His hon. and gallant friend had suggested that it would be very interesting to know in how many cases, during the past year, birth certificates were available for those under the age of eighteen. If they had some statistics of that sort he thought those who differed from them would, like themselves, be put into a more advantageous position for approaching this thorny subject. Both those who were opposed to having a limit of eighteen years imposed upon recruits and those who would like to see a rigid limit drawn would, under this clause have the whole position before them. The whole point which they raised and which had escaped the right hon. Gentleman's attention was the fact that where young men were not taken for the Regular Army they could be taken for the Militia and other Forces, so that really deserving young men of proper military spirit who were desirous of serving their country were not in any way shut out. He was sure that it was not the intention in any degree of his hon. and gallant friend to prevent any recruit from serving his country in any branch of the Service he might choose. If that had been the idea of the Amendment, he would have been the first to oppose it, but he knew that the hon. and gallant Gentleman took a great interest in the recruiting of the Army; his idea was that the country feared that the Army was not composed exactly of the class of men they should get, and that consequently proper precautions should be taken that boys were not sent abroad before they were fit for duty. He really thought that as the question affected the very foundations of the Army, they might have had a little more interest displayed in it upon the Radical benches. They were talking now not in the middle of the night, but in the middle of the day when every one was fresh. But it was the old story. Hon. Members opposite were never present when it was a question of strengthening the Forces of the Crown but only when it was desired to reduce them. When, however, they were seeking to maintain the Army at its highest level it was interesting to observe that there were only five Members of the Radical Party who wished to take part in the debate.

Mr. ASHLEY thought there was some misapprehension as to the reason why he moved this new clause. He did not attach any great or lasting importance to the exact age of eighteen or nineteen, but his object was to endeavour to ensure that every recruit enlisted in His Majesty's forces should be of efficient physique and likely to pay for his training and to be able to defend his country. The right hon. Gentleman had said that he had made great efforts in devising practical improvements, and he was quite willing to admit that certain improvements had been made. The right hon. Gentleman had indeed told every recruiting officer that he should, if possible, get a birth certificate from every man to prove that he was eighteen years of age. So far so good, but they were no better off. Supposing a man said he had not his certificate with him, he might be sixteen or seventeen or any age. They had no opportunity of pinning him down, but under this new clause a man would be obliged, if possible, to bring forward his birth certificate. If he could not do so, that was where the new clause would come in over the present system, because the recruiting officer would have to satisfy himself that in weight, height, and measurement the recruit was of sufficient physique for His Majesty's forces. It would not be sufficient that a recruit should state he was eighteen years of age; he would have to satisfy these medical requirements, and what was of more importance a report would have to be made by this officer; the War Office would have to put on the Table a Return showing the number of men who were enlisted of this type, and whether an undue number of them were entering the Army.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) asked whether it was the fact or not that if recruiting was difficult youths could be recruited at seventeen years of age. It appeared to him that our Army was very small and particularly smaller than it was formerly, and at all events we ought to have recruits who were up to a proper standard. They walked about in towns and saw very youthful and small people dressed up in His Majesty's uniform. He did not say they were absolutely infants, but they ought to be at school. But these youths would be of no use at all in case of war; they would not be able to stand the hard work of campaigning. Unquestionably they wanted "an old dog for a hard road," and these young men could not until they reached a certain age endure the hardships of war. The country, therefore, would only waste money upon them if they were of this very youthful age. For the purpose for which they were wanted they were of no use, as even at twenty years of age a man could not stand a campaign. It was shown in the South African War that a man of far greater age could do harder work and was much less liable to go sick than were the younger men, and even at forty the men had stood it better than the "young 'uns." He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would tell them whether he was going to keep up the rule that recruiting officers, to the best of their ability, should not take men under eighteen years of age.

MR. HALDANE assented.

SIR F. BANBURY said he quite agreed that they should not take young men in the Army, because they were limited to a certain number. If the right hon. Gentleman would extend the numbers and say 450,000 he would certainly vote for sixteen instead of eighteen. As it was he supposed he should have to vote with his hon. and gallant friend for his new clause.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 67; Noes, 241. (Division List No. 52.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,Rt Hn.Sir Alex.F
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Coates, E. Feetham(Lewisham)
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway,Rt.Hon.Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.

Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Captain Craig.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bennett, E. N.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephens (Lambeth)
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E
Harwood, George
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk Bg'hs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, C. Edinb'gh, (Central)
Radford, G. H.
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Richardson, A.

Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliff
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Waring, Walter
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams. Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

*Mr. ASHLEY moved a new clause amending Section 42 by substituting the words "Chief of the General Staff" for the words "Commander-in-Chief." The officer who unhappily had reason to make a complaint against his commanding officer was in the clause told to make it to the Commander-in-Chief, a person who had been abolished for some years. Therefore they had to consider what authority should be substituted. Two authorities could be substituted, the Army Council who in practice did deal with these complaints or an individual member of that Council. So long as the right hon. Gentleman held his office he would be pleased to move that he should be the proper official to whom complaint should be made, but he could quite see that it might be impossible for the right hon. Gentleman or any other Minister to take that duty upon himself. They had, therefore, to consider what authority should take the place of the defunct Commander-in-Chief so as to receive complaints. He himself preferred that complaint should be made to an individual rather than to a body like the Army Council, because he would be able in all probability to give more attention to it. It was under these circumstances that he begged to move.

New Clause—

"Amendment of Army Act, 1881, Section 42, by substituting 'Chief of the General Staff' for 'Commander-in-Chief.'"—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Viscount CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) thought that as the Amendment was of an important character the right hon. Gentleman would do well to consider it. He certainly hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see the way to accept it, because since the article was framed the Commander-in-Chief had ceased to exist. His hon. friend had left the matter rather open in his Amendment as to whether complaint should be made to the Army Council or an individual member of the Council. He himself was in favour of sending the complaint to the Army Council rather than to one officer. He supported the Amendment.

Mr. HALDANE said it was quite right that this question should be raised in order that the mind of the House might be set at rest. His objections to accepting the Amendment were two, first, that it was not necessary, and secondly, that the case had already been provided for. The position of Commander-in-Chief having been abolished, provision had been made for this very case. An Order in Council was passed in 1904, which provided that all the powers of the Commander-in-Chief other than statutory powers should rest in the Army Council. This was a statutory power, but that did not matter, because, the Commander-in-Chief being abolished, the statutory powers lapsed, and it was the duty of the Army Council to deal with these matters. It was a mere formality, because, as he had said, the Commander-in-Chief was no longer existing, and automatically, by the mere fact of the Order in Council, the Secretary of State would be guided in the exercise of his prerogative by the Army Council.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH asked whether it was advisable to have a term of an obsolete character—" Commander-in-Chief "—in an Act of Parliament which was brought up every year.

*MR. HALDANE said the Bill which he had stated he would bring in, dealt not only with that, but with a good many of these statutory powers; it would be purely a drafting Bill. He had not yet had an opportunity of bringing forward the Army Council Powers Bill, but he hoped to introduce it later in the session. He wanted to pass it as soon as he got an opportunity, but until that Bill became law it was impossible to deal with these mere formalities. Questions of discipline, and this was one, could not go to the Chief of the General Staff. All these important appeals ought not to go to a single individual; they would go to the King, and the King, who would be advised by the Secretary of State, whether by virtue of the Order in Council, or the directions contained in it, consulted the Army Council. It was the Army Council which, under the provisions of the Order in Council, took the place of the Commander-in-Chief. Several cases happened to which this section applied. They went to the Army Council, which directed the proper procedure and made exhaustive inquiry. The result of that inquiry went to the Secretary of State, who himself took part in the Army Council administration. The military and civil members would sit together at the inquiry, and then the Secretary of State gave advice to the Sovereign, whose directions would be issued. In other words, they had got the most complete tribunal just now which it was possible to have. The object of the hon. Member in moving his Amendment was precisely that which was served by the state of things now existing. The Chief of the General Staff could not possibly cope with it, and therefore the Army Council had been selected under the Order in Council to discharge these duties.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) said he could not understand why the right hon. Gentleman would not accept the drafting Amendment in this case.

*MR. HALDANE: No, not the Chief of the General Staff.

MR. LAMBTON understood from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that the matter was provided for, and that it was not necessary to alter the wording of the Bill. But they wanted words which officers would understand.

MR. HALDANE said it was very difficult to consider this as a drafting Amendment. He was in this position: he had never seen the Amendment until five minutes ago. It had not been put upon the Paper, and it was impossible for him to drive a steel ram rod into a delicate piece of mechanism. He must consider what he was doing; he must consider the words before he could possibly assent to them; it was much better that the matter should be dealt with in the Bill which he had promised to introduce before long, and which would deal with all these subjects.

MR. LAMBTON said the right hon. Gentleman's explanation was not sufficient. He talked of driving a steel ram rod into a delicate piece of mechanism, but he was employing words which were utterly unintelligible to any officer. If no Commander-in-Chief existed now, how on earth was application to be made to him to obtain justice? It was a really important matter. He was sure that the right hon. Gentleman in five minutes—if he were assisted by the Attorney-General for Ireland near him—could easily find words to convey to the House and the Army his position. They really must press the Amendment.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: was sure the House would think absurd the retention of the term " Commander-in-Chief."

The right hon. Gentleman said with truth that the punishments which were inflicted by the Commander-in-Chief had been transferred to the Army Council. They had one definition of the word "Commander-in-Chief" for the purposes of this section; but later in the Act there was another section which defined it as meaning: "The Field-Marshal or other officer, or the Commander-in-Chief of the forces for the time being." Why put in the Act the description of a person who had no existence, and why in another part of the Act give a different definition, which under the existing state of things could have no meaning? From the point of view of drafting he thought that the Amendment was well worth consideration.

MR. HALDANE: I have promised to bring in a Bill.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said it seemed to him most important that the Bill in which was contained the whole of the regulations for the governance of the Army those regulations should be set out clearly, so that every soldier could read and understand them. This clause was one of the most important of the whole Bill, and where it was a question of complaints by officers of their treatment, or with regard to the conduct of their commanding officers, it was really important that the law should be quite clear, so that an officer who was anxious to make a complaint should know to whom he was to address it. The specific point on which he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question, was whether the commanding officer would be given instructions that the Act should be read or placed in a position where it could easily be read by the regiment, and where it would be seen that the authority to whom power was delegated was the Army Council and not the Commander-in-Chief. It was important that that should be made clear: otherwise, a man who wished to make a complaint would not know to whom he was to make it. The House might be aware of the different alterations that have been made in the Army during the last three years, but they were not so obvious to the men or the officers of the Army. Having regard to the importance of the matter and to the very large amount of dirty linen which had been recently washed in public, it should be clearly laid down who was the authority to whom the powers of the Commander-in-Chief had been delegated.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said it should be made clear to the Secretary of State, first of all, that things were in a desperately muddled condition so far as the wording of the clause was concerned. Secondly, they were asked to spend a part of that afternoon to turn that muddle into law. Personally, he objected to that process. When the right hon. Gentleman complained that he had not had time to see the Amendment his complaint would not hold water, because if he had chosen he could have given adequate notice of the later stage of the Bill and his hon. friend would have put down a new clause. If there was any difficulty in dealing with the matter, the right hon. Gentleman had only himself to thank. Why could not the right hon. Gentleman at this stage of the Bill undertake to provide words which any man who read them could understand? The difficulty appeared to be that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues had not thought it worth while to put their proposals before the House in a straightforward or businesslike manner.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: said the Government proposed to make the alteration by a Bill which was to be brought in, but the alteration would not appear in the Army Act, and it was that point which they were endeavouring to impress upon the right hon. Gentleman. He would venture to make a suggestion which he thought would meet with the approval of the right hon. Gentleman and his hon. friend opposite, and would give time for this matter to be more fully considered, while it would render more clear the Army Act, which was in the hands of every soldier of His Majesty's forces. He suggested that it would meet the right hon. Gentleman's objection and also that of his hon. friend opposite, if he were to insert in Subsection 3 of Clause 190 words "explaining that the expression "Commander-in-Chief" meant "Army Council" instead of the present "Field-Marshal or other officer of His Majesty commanding the forces for the time being." He would suggest the withdrawal of the Amendment on an undertaking by the Secretary of State to that effect. It would simplify matters very much and allow them to get on with the work of the Committee. Otherwise he thought a great wrong would be done to those who were desirous of having the Army Act in their hands. Any Bill that might be passed later on would never reach the hands of officers, let alone the men, to all intents and purposes for a whole year, and the Army Act would become obsolete on the very day they put it into point.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The question is whether the clause shall be read a second time, and the hon. Member is not speaking to that.

*MR. ASHLEY said he would be willing to withdraw with a view to substituting the Army Council for the Chief of the General Staff. But he could see no valid reason why the Amendment should not be accepted.

LORD BALCARRES said one wondered why the right hon. Gentleman should not amend the Bill rather than propose to introduce fresh legislation. The right hon. Gentleman said it had to be introduced. The matter had been hanging for two years at least, perhaps three. He was not certain that the Party to which he belonged had not delayed it for at least twelve months. The proposal to transfer by Bill the statutory powers vested in the Commander-in-Chief to the Secretary of State for War involved questions of the constitution of the Army Council. With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman he must tell him that the Army Council and its constitution was not a matter which was in the ordinary sense of the term non-controversial. Very large questions were raised, and he thought the events of the last week or two in which the Army Council as an entity had been split up into two, three, or four individual subordinate entities, where the opinion of one member of the Army Council was quoted against the opinions of others, made the whole question of its constitution one of very considerable importance, and no Bill amending it could pass the House *sub silentio.* The right hon. Gentleman in a purely incidental phrase had said that in addition to transferring the powers of the Army Council, which had hitherto been vested in the Commander-in-Chief, another object was to be served by that Bill. He did not want to anticipate discussion on the new Bill, but he thought it was probably material to this point, as the Bill had to deal with the Act they were now discussing, that they should know what that other point was. It might also, like the amendment of the Commander-in-Chief's functions and privileges, deal with something under the Army Act. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would tell them when the Bill was going to be introduced. He did not wish to labour the point further, but anything further dealing with the constitution of the Army Council was of considerable importance, and would, he thought, require some scrutiny by Members of the House if it was allowed to pass at all.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that if the intention was to re-introduce the Army Council Bill which was prepared at the time of the creation of the Army Council by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon, he should offer strong opposition to it. They would be out of order in discussing the details of the Bill on this occasion, but it raised constitutional issues.

*MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said the right hon. Gentleman had told them that all this was going to be put in order in a subsequent Bill, but he could not tell them when the Bill was going to be introduced.

*THE CHAIRMAN: We have really nothing to do with the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned that he is going to introduce a Bill to deal with this question, but we cannot go on discussing it. The only question before us is whether this clause is to be read a second time.

MR. CARLILE hoped it would not be read a second time in its present condition. It was a very undesirable thing that officers in His Majesty's service should be referred by the Army Bill, if they wanted any of their wrongs righted, not merely to a nebulous person not having such substance even as a nebulous body had, but to a person who had no existence at all. They could not understand why the right hon. Gentleman hesitated to accept this or some other Amendment which would really embody in flesh and blood some individual to whom these persons suffering wrong might have the opportunity of appealing. If he would put the Adjutant-General in he had no doubt that his hon. friend would accept that Amendment, or the Army Council if the right hon. Gentleman did not wish to fix the matter any nearer. But it was an inconceivable thing that they should be asked at that hour of the day to pass a Bill containing such a provision as that; it was ridiculous on the very face of it. What other Department of the State would submit to such a thing? Since it had been his privilege to be in Parliament he never remembered any Secretary of State coming to the House and telling them to pass such a ridiculous provision on the ground that in the distant future some other legislation was to take place. They were there to deal with business. Why they should not deal with it in a businesslike way while they had their hand to it, passed the wit of man to conceive. He therefore hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make the matter definite and clear, so that those to whom they were much beholden for their devotion to their service on behalf of their King and country might at any rate feel that there was a Court of Appeal to whom they could go, and not to a supposed individual having no existence, and placed in this Bill merely because the right hon. Gentleman would not accept a most practical Amendment. If he would accept the Adjutant-General perhaps that would meet the difficulty. Anyhow it seemed a preposterous thing that they should be called upon to pass the measure in its present form and he hoped his hon. friend would go to a division unless he got some satisfactory assurance that this manifest abuse of the position of officers in the Army was not to be allowed to obtain.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said it had been pointed out that they had a long and laborious task before them, and it was very much better that he should confine himself as briefly as possible to one or two points instead of enlarging upon a number of questions which had been raised. They had an enormous number of clauses to get through. He wanted to ask the Minister for War whether it was a fair thing to put them off what he admitted to be on the whole a reasonable and fair Amendment by the promise of future legislation, when he had already been warned that the very Bill he proposed to introduce would be strenuously opposed by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. What after all was the proposal made? There either was to be a real appeal or there was to be no appeal. At present there was absolutely no appeal except to this unembodied nebulosity. There was no Commander-in-Chief, therefore the appeal must either be made to the Army Council or to the Chief of the Staff. Did the right hon. Gentleman say he had not read the Bill, that he had not considered where the appeal was to be made, that he did not know perfectly well that there was now no Commander-in-Chief except himself—a very able one? His hon. friend was prepared to accept him as an arbiter, to accept the Chief of the Staff or the Army Council, and to yield to any fair arrangement in the wording of his Amendment which would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman. But the right hon. Gentleman like the Chief Secretary for Ireland was prepared to bang the box and say he would do nothing until he introduced a little later on some unknown Bill which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean had warned him he would oppose tooth and nail. That was a very unfair condition of things, and he thought it warranted the noble Lord the Member for Maidstone in saying that the Government treated every Amendment moved from that side of the House with absolute contempt. Even although the right hon.

Gentleman admitted that a grave defect in the present Act was pointed out, apparently unknown to him before, and that the Amendment was a reasonable and fair one he would not accept it.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Member is not in order in discussing another Bill.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said the only answer given to them in opposition to this Amendment was that in future legislation would be introduced.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Member is now merely repeating himself.

MR. COURTHOPE thought they ought to press the right hon. Gentleman on this point. They had made it quite clear that the clause required amending, and the right hon. Gentleman said it was going to be amended by future legislation. But the right hon. Gentleman had no right to assume that the legislation to which he referred would be passed. They had pointed out an anomaly which, by the right hon. Gentleman's own admission, was to be redressed and removed, and they must therefore press him to give them some more definite reason for rejecting this very modest Amendment.

MR. HALDANE thought he had made the point clear. The appeal would come through the Secretary to the Army Council. The only use of the Act of Parliament was to put right what was in substance right, and what was constantly working. That would have to be done by a Bill outside this Act, and that would be the proper time to amend the Army Annual Act.

EARL WINTERTON asked what steps had been taken to make clear to those who would come under the Act the alterations which had been made. Many of them did not know that this office had been abolished, and it should be made clear that that alteration had been made.

MR. HALDANE said it was made clear, because the Order in Council said that the right the Commander-in-Chief had now passed to the Army Council.

SIR F. BANBURY said the right hon. Gentleman had met the point to a certain extent, but the officers would find it difficult to understand to whom the appeal was to be made unless some alteration was made. This clause seemed very complicated because it referred to an officer who no longer existed. With that love for symmetry which all legal minds possessed, he should have thought that the first thing the right hon. Gentleman would have done would have been to have found out that those words in the section meant nonsense, or nothing at all. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that they had no meaning. He said the Order in Council was well known and appeared in certain documents. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to alter this matter now and put it right. It was no use saying that he was going to alter it. The Secretary for War was a great apostle of the doctrine of efficiency, and that doctrine laid down that they should never put off until to-morrow what they could do to-day. Why could not the right hon. Gentleman accept the simple words which had been proposed and make this clause run the same as the Order in Council. [Cries of "Divide, divide."]

MR. LAMBTON pointed out that Clause 190 defined the term "Commander-in-Chief." Was he going to make the alteration when that clause was reached? If so, why not make the alteration now?

MR. HALDANE said that if he put it in now he would not be touching Clause 190. He could not change the drafting without changing it right through the Act. Not only the Army Act, but other Acts were involved. When the change was made he should correct the draft of the Army Act.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 71 Noes, 243. (Division List No. 53.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Winterton, Earl
Wortley Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Ashleyland Mr. Lambton.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H (Essex, Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn Richard Knig't
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey

Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Murray, James
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J.W. H (Somerset, E
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Waring, Walter
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

MR. ASHLEY moved a new clause having for its object the omission from Clause 136 of the Army Act of the words "or by any Royal Warrant for the time being." He pointed out that Clause 138 laid it down that penal deductions might be made from the pay of the ordinary soldier in eight specific cases. His contention was that there should be embodied in this Bill the specific instances where it was allowable for the military authorities to deduct a certain amount from the pay of the soldier, and that these should be the only instances in which deductions might be made. Why give the Secretary of State power under a Royal Warrant to make deductions for any offence or cause he liked? If the right hon. Gentleman could not be trusted in respect of one clause, why give him such extensive powers under another. He begged to move.

New clause—

"To amend Clause 136 of the Army Act, 1881, by omitting the words 'or by any Royal Warrant for the time being.'"—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. HALDANE said the sections which distinguished between the two kinds of deductions—those made under the Act as distinguished from those made by Royal Warrant—were Sections 137 and 138. The deductions made under the Act were penal deductions, and it was right that they should be set out. The other deductions made by Royal Warrant were not penal deductions. The amount due by an officer who left his mess bill unpaid, and certain other charges, might be deducted from his pay, and such debts were dealt with under the power conferred by Royal Warrant. That was why the offences to be treated as penal were put in the Act, and the matters to be dealt with under Royal Warrant were not.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. ASHLEY moved a new clause to amend Clause 137 of the Army Act, which permits the stoppage of the ordinary pay of an officer who absents himself without leave unless a satisfactory explanation is given. He pointed out that under Clause 137 as it stood, if an officer had six months' pay due to him and he absented himself for a few days he might forfeit the whole of his arrears of pay. He thought the intention was that he should only forfeit the pay for the days on which he was absent, as was the rule in the case of a private soldier.

New Clause—

"To amend Clause 137 of the Army Act, 1881"—(*Mr. Ashley.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. HALDANE said the deduction under this section was a penal deduction. If an officer absented himself without leave, it might be a small matter, simply measurable by the stopping of his pay during the time he was away. But it might be a matter very grave indeed which would make it right that all arrears due to him should be stopped. In order that justice should be done as between a simple case and an extreme case the qualifying words as to a satisfactory explanation being given were contained in the Act. That was a matter which the commander-in-chief would determine; he would consider the circumstances and order such deduction as might seem necessary—it might be a few days' pay or six months' pay.

MR. ASHLEY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman laid it down that an officer should be put in a worse position than a private soldier. A private soldier could only be fined for the number of days he was absent.

MR. HALDANE said the position of an officer who absented himself might be very grave indeed, and it might be necessary not only to stop his pay, but to try him by court martial.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he understood that there was a considerable feeling of dissatisfaction among the non-commissioned officers and men in regard allowances. He moved a new clause, explaining that he did not bring it forward in a hostile spirit, but rather with the view of extracting from the Secretary of State for War, a statement as to what he proposed to do in the way of revising the King's Regulations. Under the operation of the present regulations many inequalities arose, and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman seriously to consider the subject at a time when the whole of these Army matters were receiving drastic treatment. He begged to move.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Having heard the hon. Member, I think before I can put this I must ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any public charge involved in it.

MR. HALDANE said there were difficulties in the way of accepting the new clause because it involved the raising of the rates for allowances for which he had taken no money on the Estimates. Perhaps he might be allowed to say that he recognised the decrepancies to which attention had been called, and he would give the matter his consideration.

The proposed new clause was ruled to be out of order.

CAPTAIN CRAIG moved to omit Clause 44 of the Army Act. He said his desire was to call attention to the question of field punishment. Last year he and others on that side of the House made an earnest appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to amend the regulations with respect to field punishment. A sympathetic reply was given, and he wished to know whether anything had been done. There was a very strong feeling against the punishment of British soldiers in presence of natives abroad. He was sure that anyone who had had any experience in the infliction of field punishment would recognise how important it was for the credit of the British Army in the field that punishments should not be carried out in the presence of the natives of the country with which we happened to be at war. Last year the Secretary for War admitted that something should be done to soften these punishments. He moved to omit the clause in order to draw attention to the fact that the new Rules were laid on the Table of the House on 30th January this year, and to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would arrange in future for a clause which would enjoin officers in carrying out the punishments under Section 6 and at page 99 of the Appendix to do so as humanely as possible, and to see that they were not carried out in presence of natives. Such a clause would give great satisfaction to hon. Members sitting on those benches. A sympathetic answer from the right hon. Gentleman would satisfy him.

New Clause—

"To omit Section 44 of the Army Act, 1881."—(*Captain Craig.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Clause be read a second time."

MR. HALDANE said that as a result of the discussion last year a special Expert Committee was appointed to go into this matter and that Committee revised the whole of the rules as to punishments. There was a certain class of persons—he was glad to say they were very few in number—who, when hostilities were about to break out, and they were at the front, incurred punishment deliberately in order to be sent to the rear. The punishment referred to by the hon. and gallant Member would reach that class. The men would be subject to discipline which was sufficiently severe but much more gentle than was formerly the case. As to the other point raised by the hon. and gallant Member, no British officer would expose a white man to anything which would seem to lower the dignity of the white race in the eyes of the natives, and, therefore, very special care was taken that in those cases nothing was done which would encourage such indignity.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said that in view of the very sympathetic reply of the right hon. Gentleman he begged leave to withdraw his proposal.

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule:

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said he wished to ask a question with regard to the allowance of forage for Army horses. The matter was raised last year, and no satisfactory answer was then given by the Secretary of State for War. The right hon. Gentleman would see that the allowance ration was only 10lbs., but it was recognised that that was too small for cavalry horses. Many cavalry officers considered that the ration was insufficient for a horse in full work, and that they would not limit their own horses to that slender ration when doing the same kind and amount of work if the horses were to be kept in good condition.

MR. HALDANE said that the hon. Member took such an interest in this matter that he would consider any point raised by him. The Schedule of rations had been considered by an expert Committee, and the point raised by the hon. Member had been adequately considered, but he would make quite sure of it.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."—(*Mr. Haldane.*)

*SIR CHARLES DILKE thought the House might consent to the Third Reading if they were quite certain that the right hon. Gentleman would perform all his promises with regard to making the law clear in the future on the point which had been raised.

MR. HALDANE: I will do my best.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said that they must have some assurance on the subject, for he was aware that the right hon. Gentleman was not always able to carry out his promises afterwards. They had been told that the right hon. Gentleman would deal with certain matters which had been raised that afternoon in another measure which he would possibly introuce this session. But the Member for the Forest of Dean had stated that if the new Bill was anything like the measure adumbrated by the right hon. Gentleman or the measure suggested a year or two ago, it would receive the most violent opposition. They had been debarred from discussing certain subjects that afternoon, and they had had proof that they would be out of order in discussing them on an Army Council Bill. Therefore, they were in a cleft stick. The Third Reading of the Army (Annual) Bill was the only opportunity they had of discussing questions of the highest importance. On that account he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would meet the wishes of a considerable body of opinion by deferring the Third Reading to another occasion.

MR. HALDANE said that if there was any general demand for it he would willingly accede to the hon. Gentleman's request. But when the Bill to which reference was made was introduced, there would be full discussion not only of form but of substance. He, therefore, asked that the Army (Annual) Bill should be given a Third Reading.

MR. CARLILE said that this Bill, which contained a great deal of controversial matter, had been allowed to go through Committee very easily. There was no immediate pressure for the passing of the Bill and he thought that they should have another opportunity of considering its details.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) asked when the right hon. Gentleman intended to bring in the Bill referred to.

MR. HALDANE: In a few days.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time and passed.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) said he wished to call attention to the question of the two-Power standard.

*MR. SPEAKER: That question cannot be raised on the Third Reading of this Bill. It should be raised on the Shipbuilding Vote, and the Navy Votes are not included in this Bill.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he rose to draw attention to a matter connected with the administration of the Post Office, of which he had given the Postmaster-General private notice. On various occasions during this session attention had been called to the way in which the right hon. Gentleman had permitted political and other associations to have being amongst the postal servants. A great deal of feeling had existed on the subject, because there could be no question that the right hon. Gentleman had shown favour to certain of these associations and marked disfavour to others. It was a most extraordinary thing that while a Free Trade Union should be allowed to exist among the postal servants and be affiliated to Free Trade Unions outside, a branch of the Tariff Reform League was not. The existence of its organisation had been called into question because it was formally affiliated to a central body. That central body had no real connection with it nor had it any subscriptions from it, or any compacts with it. When the question of the propriety of a number of postal servants associating themselves for the purpose of propaganda, for the purpose of promoting tariff reform, was called into question by the right hon. Gentleman, his case was all the more feeble when they remembered that he tolerated the Fawcett Association whose published accounts showed subscriptions of £60 or £70 to the support of the Labour Party in that House. The Fawcett Association was also affiliated openly with that Party, the Trade Union Congress, the London Trades Council, and other associations which actively supported candidates for Parliament. The Socialist Association of the Post Office officials was also tolerated. He was the last to object to a Socialist Association in the Post Office, because he believed that the more men associated themselves in this way for propaganda, the happier would be the conditions of public service, because they would be fighting among themselves instead of organising for the purpose of making demands which the public felt were not yet due, or which they considered were detrimental to public interest. It was very doubtful whether the right hon. Gentleman had any power under the law to allow any associations of the kind. He had not the Act by him at the moment, but he believed every person on the established staff of the Civil Service was prohibited by an Act of Parliament from taking any public part in any controversy of a political character. Personally he would hail with delight the day when that Act was repealed. but while the law was such as it was, he had grave doubts as to whether the right hon. Gentleman or any other Minister had power to permit such associations. But he claimed that if he did permit Radical or Socialist organisations to exist in the Post Office, he must not try to prevent the existence of bodies which differed from his views. He denied that the Primrose League was a Party organisation. The matter would be brought before the House again and again, when opportunity offered, until the Postmaster-General permitted Post Office servants without discrimination to combine for political propaganda or social effort.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he had already fully explained his position in regard to associations within the Post Office. He had no objection to the formation of associations among the Post Office servants, for, of course, they did not carry on their operations within office hours, and had an educative effect, besides having the additional advantage of distracting the attention of the servants from matters internal to the Post Office. But the question was entirely governed by Treasury regulations; and all he had to do was to see that those regulations were carried out. He denied that he had applied the regulations partially as between different associations. There was no objection to an association being formed within the Post Office so long as it was not a branch of a parent association outside, for, as such, it would come into conflict with other outside associations. The tariff reform and free trade associations within the Post Office had brought themselves into line by severing their connection with the parent association outside. It was immaterial from his point of view whether or not the Primrose League was a party organisation. It could not be denied that it took a part in Parliamentary elections, and therefore members of it came under the Treasury regulation against Civil servants actively engaging in party politics. The Fawcett Association had been in existence for many years, and was recognised by successive Postmasters-General during that period as non-political.

MR. CARLILE said the right hon. Gentleman was under a misapprehension if he supposed that hon. Members were satisfied with his explanation on a previous occasion. Hon. Members did not leave the House on that occasion with the impression that the right hon. Gentleman had succeeded in exercising even-handed justice. The reason the matter was raised was that it was believed that one organisation formed on what they believed to be constitutional principles was not receiving from the right hon. Gentleman the same treatment as other associations. He did not think that the fact of the Fawcett Association having been in existence for twenty years justified its receiving preferential treatment. He thought the description given by the right hon. Gentleman to these other associations applied with equal force to the Fawcett Association, and that the description applied to the Fawcett Association would apply equally to such associations as the Primrose League and the Tariff Reform League. The Primrose League had always been held to be a non-party organisation. It was true that at the present time it happened that the policy of one of the great parties in the House coincided more with the ideals and objects of the Primrose League in its three main principles, but it was quite conceivable that a time might come when hon. Gentlemen opposite would receive the support of the Primrose League, because it was not bound to any party, and stood entirely alone. No one had stated that the right hon. Gentleman had given preferential treatment to the Socialists in his office, because of any great interest in Socialism there might be in Poplar or elsewhere. He would be the last to suggest that the right hon. Gentleman had spread his ægis over this organisation of Socialists in the Post Office for any such reason, but it was certainly a pity that any action of the right hon. Gentleman should create such an impression. He therefore hoped that the Postmaster-General would see the advisability in this case and others of making his position perfectly clear by either refusing to allow any organisations in his Department, or including all, and not excluding either the Primrose or the Tariff Reform League. He was aware that the right hon. Gentleman had stated that he was bound more or less by certain Treasury Minutes which laid down that the Postal officials should not take a prominent part in political organisations outside. If that was applied all round, no complaint could be made, but there was a widespread feeling that while the right hon. Gentleman allowed special preferential treatment to the Socialists, he did not extend the same treatment to other organisations.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford) said he rose to make an appeal to the Secretary of State for War in regard to what appeared to be an injustice to the secretaries of the County Associations under the Territorial Force scheme. He thought it would be within the recollection of the House that when the Territorial Bill was introduced it was provided that officers should be employed as secretaries of the County Associations, and that they would not be penalised in any way if they passed from the Regular Forces to the Territorial Force. It had been a matter of considerable difficulty to the County Associations to find suitable men to fill these offices. It was quite true that a long list had been forwarded by the Army Council of general officers, colonels, and other retired officers of the Army who were willing to serve for the ridiculously small sum which the County Associations were able to give for their services, but it was believed that it would be far better, and would secure more efficient services, if those Associations were served by local men. By Paragraph 510 of the Army Warrant, certain officers had been allowed on condition of their attending the training of the Militia, the magnificent allowance of £100 a year after so many years' service. He believed that these officers had never been asked to do anything except what was connected with the training of the Militia, so that they could not be looked upon merely as Militia officers, in the general acceptance of the term. These gentlemen had been selected by the Associations for the secretaryships of those bodies, but the Secretary for War had told him a few days ago, in answer to a question, that by the acceptance of such a position an officer would sacrifice his retired pay; so that the effect would be that in small counties where they were unable to pay a salary of more than £50 a year such an officer who accepted the position would really be losing £100 a year to enjoy the magnificent salary of £50 a year. He would have to give up the reward for his past services, and practically to pay out of his own pocket £50 a year in order to enjoy the privilege of serving the Association. He was not quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman had contemplated, when he introduced his Bill last year, that the officer who accepted the position of secretary to a County Association would have to give up his £100 a year retired pay, granted him for services already given, and, therefore, it was to be supposed services which were approved of. But the treatment was not the same all round with regard to the Territorial Army. There were brigadiers appointed to the Territorial Army—time-expired officers some of them, and some of them on half-pay. They drew their salary of £150 a year, and they were not asked to relinquish any part of their half-pay. They were allowed to add that to the salary given to them under a separate grant of the council. They still enjoyed their half-pay.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. Caldwell) said this subject did not arise under any of the Votes contained in the Consolidated Fund Bill.

Lord BALCARRES pointed out that these particular officers were losing money in order to qualify for a salary of £50 a year under the Territorial Army.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That question arises under the Vote for the Territorial Army, which is not included in the Bill.

Viscount VALENTIA said he had raised the question of the two different rates of pay—one under the Territorial Army, and the other the half-pay of officers of the Regular Army. He took it that the pay of the officers of the Regular Army would come under this Vote.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said that was so, but the pay of officers of the Regular Army did not raise the question of the pay of the officers of the Territorial Army, and the discussion must be confined to the pay of the officers of the Regular Army.

Viscount VALENTIA said he was referring to officers of the Regular Army, and surely that would come under this Vote.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the discussion must be confined to the pay of the officers of the Regular Army.

Viscount VALENTIA said in both cases they were officers of the Regular Army.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the noble Lord was referring to officers of the Regular Army who took office under the Territorial Army; therefore he was out of order.

Viscount VALENTIA: Yes; but they are losing Regular Army pay.

*Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Only as a consequence of accepting office in the Territorial Army.

Lord BALCARRES said he wished to find very great fault with the inadequacy of the pay provided for officers under Vote A. under conditions which had been recently explained. Under this Vote there was a certain class of officers who drew a very humble sum per annum, partly for services already rendered, and partly because of the expectation on the part of the War Office that the men might be of further service in the future. He wished to point out that the pay which was afforded to these men was wholly inadequate. This particular grade of men got £100 a year. When they undertook fresh responsibilities at the direct invitation of the War Office, the pay which they had to receive was wholly inadequate.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the noble Lord was really raising what he had just ruled out of order.

LORD BALCARRES said he was pointing out what he respectfully ventured to submit he was entitled to refer to, namely, that these particular men were receiving a salary which under the new conditions was inadequate.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the salaries under Vote 1 had nothing to do with the conditions under which officers served in the Territorial Army. That was a point which he had just ruled out of order.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said he had intended to raise the question on the Colonial Vote of the very serious reduction of the grant to the West Indian Agricultural Department by no less than £3,500, but owing to the right hon. Gentleman's mastery of Parliament procedure he had managed to get through the business of the Army Annual Bill that afternoon, with the result that he had not had an adequate opportunity of bringing this subject to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman who represented the Colonial Office in that House. He felt that it would not be fair to press the point at that moment, and he only rose to give the Patronage Secretary notice that at the earliest possible opportunity he proposed to call attention to this question of the grant to the West Indian Department of Agriculture and ask for some explanation of the reduction.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he had never known the Motion made before under these circumstances. It was a private Member's evening, and there was an absolute pledge given in the strongest possible terms that the time of a private Member's evening was never to be interfered with. Was it intended against the private Members opposite to proceed with a Motion of this description.

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY said he understood that the Motion of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme was out of order, and the noble Lord the Member for Hornsey, who had also a Motion on the Paper, was ill and could not be in his place. In these circumstances they would have had to have gone on with the private Bills. But that would be unfair, because Tuesday and Wednesday were always understood to be set apart for Motions, and hon. Members interested in the Bills were not present. It would be manifestly unfair to take those Bills in the absence of Members interested.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he could only speak again by leave of the House, but he thought the last point was a perfectly good one. If he were in the position of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, he should be inclined to yield to it.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA said he was sorry to stand between the House and the adjournment, but he would really like to get some answer from the Secretary of State for War as to whether he was or was not going to perpetrate a very great injustice by making a reduction in the retired pay of officers who took up work under the County Associations. It was an extremely hard case, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make an alteration in the existing regulations in order to deal with these officers in a more just way, and so as not to deprive them of their retired pay.

MR. HALDANE said he would reply at once. There was only one possible answer that could be given. By the law of the Army an officer had no right to retired pay till he had served fifteen years, and, if he retired before having completed that service, it was only on certain conditions. If he came into active service in the Militia or Yeomanry, he got a £100 per year, but that was not retired pay.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA said the wording of Paragraph 510 of the Army Pay Orders was certainly "retired pay." It was called retired pay, and he did not think it could be put in any other way.

Mr. HALDANE said an officer retiring before the completion of fifteen years' service only got the £100 if he undertook to go on serving in the active list. He was paid the £100 for service in the Militia or Yeomanry. His case was thus differentiated from that of the officer who had retired pay in that sense. An officer on half-pay might be called for active work, and his half-pay was less than his retired pay. An officer who had retired had no active service, and he was allowed to take up a secretaryship under the County Association and draw a salary. An officer who was on half-pay might, under certain circumstances, be allowed to fulfil these functions. If the pay was less than retired pay, and he was not paid for active services actually being rendered, he might be allowed to take it. In the case put the officer was receiving £100 a year for active services being rendered, and it was a principle of the Treasury and of the War Office, and he hoped it would remain the principle of the Government, that a man was not paid twice over for rendering duties to the State. For that reason it was impossible, consistently with that principle, to allow these officers to draw their salaries as secretaries to Territorial Associations in addition to the pay which they received for active duties.

Lord BALCARRES said the right hon. Gentleman must forgive him for saying that his defence was wholly technical. What were the facts of the case? His noble friend after prolonged inquiry, and after many candidates had been examined, found that it was only possible for his country to pay £50 a year to the secretary. That particular secretary was enjoying, under Paragraph 510, funds from the War Office to the tune of £100 a year. The War Office had now written to say that because this captain was earning £50 a year from the Oxford County Association and giving his whole time to the service, he was obliged to forfeit the £100 he was earning from the Government. That was to say, the secretary of that County Association was not only giving his whole time to the work, but sacrificing £50 a year into the bargain. The right hon. Gentleman said nothing but work on the active list qualified a man for that £100 a year. Let him point out that when this Paragraph 510 was drawn up the conditions of the Territorial Army did not exist. These were new conditions, new responsibilities, new duties, and he had said it was in response to the invitation of such persons as the right hon. Gentleman that men of this calibre had come forward. He gathered that he was wrong in that, but men who had been running these County Associations had been pressed to choose for these responsible places the very best men that could be got. This particular man, who he was assured was a first class man, was not technically speaking on the active list, and would be doing more valuable work as secretary of the Territorial County Association than by that qualification which the right hon. Gentleman said he had forfeited of going out for two or three weeks in the year with a militia regiment. He did not think that on broad grounds the action of the War Office could be defended. It seemed to him to have a flavour of the Treasury about it. The right hon. Gentleman, if he wanted good men, and if he wanted a large choice, must arrange his conditions so that acceptance of this office should not involve a heavy pecuniary fine. This particular individual for aught he knew, might be a millionaire, but he assured the right hon. Gentleman that these small cheese-paring actions on his part were doing far more to injure the future of the Territorial Army than the money which was being poured out and wasted on that force in other directions. They fined this man £50 a year for giving his whole time to the county. A thing like that could not be suppressed. It had got to be known. It was a small and a mean economy on the part of the Treasury. He did not blame the right hon. Gentleman, because he imagined other agencies were at work, but by creating a sense of hardship and injustice the right hon. Gentleman must recognise that he was inflicting a very grave blow upon the efficiency of the force he had brought into being.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at six minutes before Eight o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 26th March, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]—Presented (pursuant to leave given yesterday); read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners.

London and Windsor Motor Roads, Tramroads, and Tramways Bill [H.L.]—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]—Re-Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Audenshaw and Saddleworth Urban District Councils Bill [H.L.], now Audenshaw Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]—Reported with Amendments.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]—Read 2ª (according to order), and committed for Wednesday next.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PETITION.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition against; Of the county council of the county of Ayr; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Correspondence relating to the recruitment of labour in the Nyasaland Protectorate for the Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia Mines.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

List of Public Elementary schools and certified efficient schools in Wales (including Monmouthshire) on 1st August, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LUNACY (SCOTLAND).

General rules for the management of the Edinburgh District Asylum at Bangour. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered (according to Order), and suspended for this day's sitting.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended), read 2ª (The Lord Privy Seal (*M. Ripon*). Committee negatived. Bill read 3ª, and passed.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.

Brought from the Commons. Read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 40.)

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order of the day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, viz., "that the Bill be read 2ª this day six months."

*The Earl of MAR and KELLIE: My Lords, I think that one of the most interesting features of the debate yesterday afternoon was that, after gently chiding the noble Viscount, Lord Ridley, for irrelevancy, the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack proceeded to give a very interesting account of the rating of land values in London, where the system, certainly of land tenure, and, I think, also of rating, is utterly different from the system in Scotland. I wondered if at the back of the mind of the Government there could have been any idea of the vivisection of poor Scotland to prepare the way for a future successful operation on London. If the noble and learned Lord did not intend to convey any such hint, I think it shows how difficult it is to speak absolutely to the point on a Bill which, although it contains very little in itself, leads to considerably greater things beyond.

Since this Bill was before your Lordships' House in the autumn of last year, much has been done by way of public meetings in Scotland, on both sides, to explain the measure and its probable effect. My noble friends, Lord Camperdown and Lord Balfour, Mr. Younger, the Member for Ayr Burghs, and others have done great service in helping to expose the fallacies which underlie its principles, showing that your Lordships were amply justified in rejecting this Bill in the closing hours of last session, for the reason, if for no other, that it gave the country more time to consider and understand its purport. The question now is, has anything occurred in the interval to induce your Lordships to reconsider your former decision? I fully recognise the conciliatory tone of the speech of my noble friend in charge of the Bill and of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, and I rather gathered from what they said that concessions would be made should the Bill reach the Committee stage. I venture to suggest that these concessions will have to be pretty substantial and pretty drastic in order to satisfy the reasonable objections of the opponents of the Bill.

Perhaps one of the least important objections to the Bill is that of its probable great cost, but it is a very real objection on the part of the ratepayers; and as one of the objects of the Bill is claimed to be to obtain information for the Government, it is so far satisfactory at least to Scotland that the Government have admitted that, at any rate, part of the cost shall be charged to the Treasury and not to the overburdened ratepayers. I submit that this Bill should be most carefully considered and threshed out in this House, for I apprehend—and my apprehension is borne out by what the noble and learned Lord said yesterday—that your Lordships may not be able to amend the inevitable rating Bill which will follow. Therefore, I do think that we are entitled to ask what are the intentions of the Government with regard to the rating of these land values when they are ascertained through the operation of this Bill.

It has been said that this Bill is the first step in carrying out the proposals contained in the Report of the Solicitor-General's Committee on the Glasgow Bill. I think we may ask whether this is so. It will be remembered—the noble Lord who moved the Second Reading of this Bill reminded us of it—that the Government have already repudiated one of the most important proposals in that Report—namely, the proposal to tax existing feu-duties. Do they also propose to repudiate the most important proposal of all—the proposal to change the basis of rating from the annual value of the land and buildings to the value of the land apart from the buildings? The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack says he does repudiate that, but I have not heard another member of the Government say "Ditto." Or does the Government propose to keep to the present system and impose an additional rate on land values, as was proposed in Mr. Sutherland's Bill, which, you will remember, the Committee emphatically condemned. If the basis of local taxation is thus to be changed, I submit that it would work a hardship on the poorer ratepayers in the country districts and in the smaller burghs difficult to calculate. In the smaller manufacturing towns there are often flourishing industries which have grown up from small beginnings far from the railway. At the present time the owners of these factories pay a considerable proportion of the local rates, as the annual value appearing in the valuation roll has, as a rule, been calculated on a percentage upon the cost of the valuable buildings erected on these sites. If the sites were cleared of buildings they would be practically worthless, and would only fetch at least the market value of ground in the immediate vicinity.

Who, then, is to make up the loss in rates which must inevitably arise from the annual value of these buildings being excluded from rating and only the site values assessed? Surely, not the lord of the manor, for what would be the value of his park with mansion, cottages, stables, and gardens eliminated? In my opinion the difference would have to be made up for the most part by shopkeepers, who in these days of co-operative societies have a hard struggle to make a living in the smaller towns, by villa residents, and by artisans and the better class workmen who live in their own cottages with gardens, which the excellent feuing system in Scotland does so much to encourage. If this Bill is to pass, I submit that to prevent this possible injustice to the ratepayers in the smaller burghs, an Amendment must be inserted making it optional to the town councils to adopt the Act or not as they think fit. Surely this is not too much to ask. Or has the Government the same curious mistrust of the Scottish town councils as we know they have of the Scottish county councils ?

This Bill applies to all land and heritages in Scotland, with the exception of railways and canals. Let us see how it would affect agricultural land. I believe it would be found, in the case of most of the small and moderate size farms in Scotland, that the land value, after deducting the cost of the buildings, equipment, fences, and the like, would work out at a minus quantity. Therefore, if there is no land value, and if the rate is to be only at the land value, half of the agricultural land in Scotland will pay no rates. As a landlord, I might thank the Government for their dole, but, as chairman of my county council, I should be at my wit's end to know how the business of the county was to be carried on. Surely this shows the futility and absurdity of making the Bill apply to agricultural subjects. Another difficulty occurs to me. The smaller manufacturing towns in Scotland are increasing very slowly as a rule. Some are going back, the tendency being for new factories to go to the great cities and the larger towns, partly, no doubt, for the obvious reasons of market, of labour, and of transport, and partly, I think, because the difference in rates in favour of the smaller towns is not what it used to be although the land is cheaper. There is a considerable quantity of land within these burghs waiting to be feued, but in the meantime let as agricultural land. How is this land to be valued under this Bill when it may not be feued for years, perhaps not for generations ?

At a meeting of the Edinburgh Town Council held last week it was stated that there were no less than 3,800 acres of such land within the city of Edinburgh waiting to be feued, and which cannot be all taken up for upwards of 200 years. How is that land to be valued under this Bill ? I cannot see how the capital value can be ascertained, even approximately, unless it is put up to auction. Can it be the object of the Government to make the owners of such land pay more in rates than they receive in rent, in order to compel them to feu it at the agricultural rate, and so, by a side wind, abolish what is known as the unearned increment ? That course would be confiscation, or any other opprobrious term your Lordships would like to apply to it. How else is this policy going to cheapen land, as the Government boast it will do ? Perhaps I am unduly suspicious. I would, if I could, be reassured by the obvious sincerity of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. Individually, I admit, the members of the Government, at any rate in this House, are like lambs ; but collectively, if I may say so, there are some of us on this side who think that they sometimes show decided predatory instincts. But, seriously, my Lords, I submit that *bona fide* agricultural land within an urban area, when it can be shown that it is not to be held up for an exorbitant price later on, should, in all justice, be valued, as at present, at the actual annual rental, and not, in addition, on its prospective capital value, as is proposed in this Bill, and which would be impossible of ascertainment without the merest guesswork.

I believe that there is practically no holding up of land in Scotland, at any rate, not in the smaller burghs ; and, if there is, surely a very different Bill from the present could be devised to remedy the evil without penalising innocent people. Land, no doubt, is kept vacant in the centre of towns for the purpose of preserving the amenity of better-class houses, but these much-needed open spaces will be swept away if you carry out the policy which this Bill must lead up to. There is one other point. What is to become of the unfortunate owner of a site in an important street like Princes Street, Edinburgh, who has not the means to erect buildings equal to the most up-to-date buildings in that thoroughfare ? The Solicitor-General, in a recent speech, indicated that such an owner was not at the present time paying his proper proportion of the local rates, and in future will be made to do so. Surely, my Lords, this is penalising the man who may not have the means or the inclination to pull down and re-erect his property at intervals of years according to the caprice or speculative activities of his neighbours. I conceive that to be an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject.

If this Bill is to be read a second time I submit that there are at least three Amendments which are absolutely necessary to make it tolerable. The first is that it should be confined to urban areas, the second that it should be made optional, and the third that *bona fide* agricultural land within an urban area, which the owner is willing to feu when applied for at the current rate, should be exempt. This Bill carries out to the letter the recommendation in the Report of the Solicitor-General's Committee to which I have already alluded. The recommendation is as follows:—

> "That a measure be introduced making provision for a valuation being made of land in the burghs and counties of Scotland apart from the buildings and improvements thereon."

But, my Lords, I submit that the arguments and proposals in the Report which led up to that recommendation are, for the most part, so futile and so impossible that we are entitled to know at this stage, not only what the rating proposals of the Government are, but if they are prepared to consider favourably the Amendments, among others, which I have indicated. If the answer is in the negative, I hope your Lordships will decline to read the Bill a second time.

*LORD BELHAVEN AND STENTON: My Lords, I do not propose to detain your Lordships for more than one moment, as I wish to speak only upon one point. I think noble Lords who are opposed to this Bill were very much reassured by what fell from the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack yesterday, when he said that it would not be proposed in any future Bill to place the whole of the rates upon land, as was originally thought to be the intention, instead of upon the combined subject of land and houses. But while we were reassured on that point, there was another statement which the noble and learned Lord made which was not at all reassuring. I allude to his reference to the rating of vacant spaces as if the land were building land; and it is in that connection, and especially with regard to the small burghs in Scotland, that I wish to make one or two remarks. These burghs have a considerable amount of agricultural land around them, and in some cases there is a quantity of waste land that produces nothing. If this vacant land is to be valued as though it were prospective building land, it will be quite impossible for the owner of such land to pay rates upon that valuation. Much of this land is hundreds of yards from any existing road, and it is not until the owner has, at great expense, constructed roads and made the land fit for feuing that any recoupment can be obtained, and even then it may be many years before he is recouped for his outlay in road-making and so on. Therefore, I hope that in any proposals which may be made in the rating Bill that is to follow this Bill, these areas will not be included as building land until they are so available. If the Bill goes into Committee great care should be taken with regard to this particular point, and rules should be laid down by which land which is not at present available for building should not be treated as a prospective building site.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): My Lords, I think, although I suppose the noble Earl who resumed the debate this evening would not agree with me, there is a considerable amount of agreement in the House that the main provision suggested, but not enacted, in the Bill—namely, that there should be a separate valuation of site and structure—is one which deserves further consideration. But the real objection to the measure is one which is not dealt with by its provisions—namely, the objection to rating which is supposed to follow upon this legislation. If I am asked to say whether the Bill is intended to facilitate the discussion of the subject of rating, I would admit that it is so; but, on the other hand, I concur with the Lord Chancellor in repudiating the extreme theories which are attributed to those who support the Bill. When these theories exist, however, and if the object is to avoid them, it seems to be not unnatural that further information should be acquired; and the Government therefore propose the plan suggested in the Bill because we think that this information may be so acquired.

I could not exactly follow the argument of the noble Earl with regard to the valuation of agricultural land. I understood him to argue that if the Bill passed, the agricultural land of the country outside the burghs would not be valued at all, and that the county councils would in consequence be reduced to straits. I do not see that this conclusion follows from the provisions of the Bill. I cannot help thinking that the difficulties of expenses are exaggerated. I think the question of expense depends very much on the precision of the information enforced. If absolute precision is enforced, then no doubt there might be very large expense, but it is not enforced by this Bill. What is required in this Bill is very much what was laid down by the Commission on Local Taxation. That Commission said—

> "On the whole, we are disposed to think that a valuation of sites sufficiently accurate for the purpose, and not inferior to the present valuation of hereditaments"—

and I dwell upon that phrase—

> "could be made without undue labour and expense. Such a valuation could obviously be made only by professional experts, although the *data* could be understood and criticised by anyone possessed of common sense and knowledge."

I am quite aware that the Commission were concerned with urban values only and that this Bill applies to all sites, but I think the opinion I have quoted might be applicable to both sides of the question.

Besides that, the Bill is consistent with the present practice, and, indeed, follows the present practice. May I remind your Lordships what the present practice is? In the first place, the assessor sends out to every owner in the county or burgh a notice for particulars. In the second place, the owner returns those particulars filled up. In the third place, the assessor, after such consultation and correspondence with the owner as is necessary, makes up and sends out his notice of the proposed entry in the valuation roll. Then the owner can appeal, but he appeals to the valuation committee of the county or burgh, and the hearing takes place before the Committee. Sometimes evidence is led, but I think seldom at great length, and the decision is, generally speaking, accepted. But if, thereafter, the owner or assessor is dissatisfied with the result, then, and then only, is there an appeal to a Court, where, of course, the usual legal questions are raised. Now I venture to maintain that in all this procedure, up to, at any rate, the last, no great expense is involved. What now is required under this Bill? There is no alteration whatever in procedure, as will be seen by Section 2. No doubt the assessor will have to put some additional questions and the owner will have to return certain additional answers. But as regards the information on which those answers can be given I agree with the opinion of the noble Lord who introduced this Bill last year, that it is generally on record or known. In large estates it is known by the factor, and in small estates it would certainly be well known to each individual owner.

I think that in most cases the cost of buildings is pretty well known, and further that evidence might generally be obtained by reference to the insurance policies taken out on the buildings in question. I admit that other items under the subsection stand in a different position. Although in the case of improvements, as in that of buildings, the original cost must be on record somewhere, still it is only the unexhausted benefit that comes in question. But the principle of unexhausted benefits of improvements is now well known and acted upon under the Agricultural Holdings Acts, and I cannot help thinking that there also, even without legal or professional assistance, it would be quite possible to put forward a statement of the particulars required without great expense. We have also the fact that all these questions will be dealt with by the same assessors and the same valuation committee. So much as regards expense.

I should wish to say a word with regard to another point on which opinions may differ. I appreciate entirely the distinction between capital value and annual value. I suppose under normal conditions the capital value to be the capitalisation of the annual value, and the annual value the annual return on capital invested. I admit that if we are to separate site and structure cases must arise where it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to assign a separate annual value to the site. On that I will only say that I admit entirely the inexpediency of rating undeveloped or unproductive capital. But how are you to avoid it? Is it avoided by confining the proposition to urban districts? How can we define urban districts? I venture to think that to define them by the ordinary boundaries would be unfair and unjust. I could from my own experience quote cases in which it would be manifestly unfair. But again I venture to maintain that the examination which we shall be able to make following on this Bill, should it be passed, will clear away many of the difficulties. If the theories are unsound, the knowledge that we shall gain will explode and not confirm them, and in these circumstances I hope the Bill will be read a second time.

*THE EARL OF CRANBROOK: My Lords, if the noble Earl who has just sat down has a difficulty in understanding the argument of the noble Earl who resumed the debate this evening as to the value of land in counties if separated from buildings, he must be more fortunate as a landowner than most of us who sit in this House. Take the county of Kent. If you were to make a valuation of the land apart from the value of the buildings and improvements upon it and the land was then only to be taxed, there would be nothing left in the county to pay rates upon. I am equally unable to appreciate how the noble Earl, who is a large landowner, can have any difficulty in understanding that. The noble Earl said, at the end of his speech, that he recognised the injustice of rating undeveloped or unproductive capital; but how, he asked, are you to avoid it. The way to avoid the injustice of taxing capital value is to stick to the present system of rating and not to fly to one which would work injustice to landowners and not have the effect which the extreme gentlemen think it would have. How can you tax the land value of a house? What this Bill is wanted for is to get landowners to say that their land is worth nothing at all. I quite admit that there are difficulties with regard to some places where land is held up, but, in regard to most of our large towns, the owners of the surrounding land are anxious and willing to sell, and are only now regretting that in consequence of the present bad state of affairs in the building trade throughout the country that is impossible. If you are going to rate as building land, land which is not worth more than agricultural value and will not be for many years to come, you will oblige landowners to give away their land because it will not be producing sufficient money to cover the rates charged upon it. That is an injustice which I feel sure your Lordships' House could not permit. I hope the Bill will be read a second time with the object of improving it in Committee.

*LORD ABINGER: My Lords, I rise to express my full agreement with the noble Viscount who moved the rejection of this Bill yesterday, and to state very briefly my reasons therefor. I listened with great interest to the eloquent speech of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, and I was one of those who welcomed his assertion that His Majesty's Government did not desire to rate land, and land only. Still, His Majesty's present Administration are a Government of many voices, all of them charming, and none of them, I am sure, more alluring than the voice of the noble and learned Lord. He dealt at length with the intentions of His Majesty's Government; but we have it on very high authority—on that of the noble Earl the Lord President—that intentions of Governments are not interesting, but that what are interesting are the actions which those intentions produce. Your Lordships will pardon my referring to such uninteresting things as intentions, but many of us feel that it is precisely with the intentions of His Majesty's Government that we are dealing when we are considering this Bill, because, although the noble and learned Lord carefully explained that it is permissive, it leads up to a larger policy. There was one point, at all events, which I think was rather glossed over by some of the speakers in favour of the Bill—the question of urban areas. I am sure there is no one in this House or in the House of Commons who would not admit at once that, where there is land in an urban area preventing the proper development of the town, that land should bear more taxation. I am quite in agreement with that. But the moment you proceed to rate such land at a higher figure than at present you will find that it will immediately decrease in value. It is evident that if land is worth a certain amount, and a Bill is brought in rating it at a higher figure, that land will depreciate, and the owner will not receive full value for the land. I hardly think this fair, and for the reasons I have stated I desire to record my protest against the Bill, and to assure my noble friend that I am thoroughly with him in his Amendment to reject it.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble Lord who introduced this Bill yesterday, in a very temperate and conciliatory speech, was good enough to quote to the House some words which I used, on the memorable evening in August last when, after an all-night sitting of the House of Commons, this Bill was laid on the Table of this House, and it was suggested to us that we might pass it into law within the few hours that then remained of the session. We then thought that His Majesty's Government treated the House with somewhat scant courtesy in making that proposal, and we have thought since that the supporters and some of the colleagues of noble Lords opposite treated us with even less courtesy when they made our rejection of the Bill the occasion for violent denunciations of this House for thwarting the will of the people.

I readily admit that the circumstances this evening are entirely different from the circumstances on that occasion. We have now abundant time to examine this Bill in detail, and it seems to me to contain many proposals which stand greatly in need of such examination. They are proposals with which I do not think we can really get to close quarters until we arrive at the Committee stage, and it is for that reason that I desire to associate myself with my noble friends Lord St. Aldwyn and Lord Balfour of Burleigh in recommending the House to give the Bill a Second Reading. I am very far from taking upon myself to say that there is no room for improvement in the present system of rating, but I wish to know a good deal more than I know at present of the particular mode in which His Majesty's Government desire that improvement to be effected. Now we are told—and truly told—that this is not a rating Bill, but I am afraid we can scarcely accept it as being a measure involving nothing more than the collection of a few innocent statistics. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has very frankly admitted that this Bill is introduced as a preliminary to ulterior legislation, and we therefore have a right to ask for some information as to the character of that ulterior legislation. We have had some very interesting announcements both from the noble and learned Lord and from the Secretary of State for the Colonies as to what that legislation is not to imply. I welcome those admissions. The noble and learned Lord imputed to us that we were somewhat uncharitable when we expressed our apprehension that behind this Bill might lurk proposals for transferring the whole of the incidence of the rates to the site value of the land. I do not know whether we are open to a charge of uncharitableness, but I think we had, at any rate, some reasonable grounds for the apprehensions which we expressed. The noble and learned Lord told us indeed that it was an impracticable and foolish dream to put all the rates upon the site, and he said that to do that would obviously eat up the land value altogether. With that I entirely agree. But do not let it be forgotten that this Bill owes its origin to the pressure put upon His Majesty's Government by gentlemen who do dream these foolish dreams and hope to see them realised.

This Bill originates in the Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons which sat in the year 1906. I noticed the other day a very interesting admission made by a member of the Committee as to the manner in which that Committee was composed. He told his hearers that it contained fifteen members. One absented himself, and of the remaining fourteen, eight were pledged to the eyes to support the principle of the Bill, and three, including the Solicitor-General, who was, unless I am mistaken, chairman of the Committee, were vice-presidents of the League for the Taxation of Ground Values. That league, we are told, was established to promote the doctrines of Mr. Henry George, and the root and groundwork of the Bill could be found in his theories. The noble and learned Lord repudiates the doctrine of Mr. Henry George, but there is something a little suspicious, if I may say so, in the fact that this Bill proceeds from a quarter in which the doctrines of Mr. Henry George were notoriously accepted.

I only want to say a few words as to the consequences which this Bill by itself might have, entirely without reference to ulterior legislation. In the first place, there is the question of expense. The noble Lord who moved, gave the House a very plausible argument to show that we were altogether wrong in anticipating that the setting up of this machinery would be expensive to the public or to any one else concerned, and he gave us an estimate of the cost of establishing this valuation in some of the great cities. The noble Lord's estimate was extraordinarily low and entirely unlike any other estimate that to the best of my belief has been put forward by those most competent to judge. A gentleman, the assessor for Roxburghshire, was cited by the noble Lord, who was ready to do the whole county for £300. I daresay he was, but I am afraid that does not inspire me with any great confidence in his judgment as arbiter of the financial fortunes of the people who reside in the county of Roxburgh. Surely, if this work of valuation is to be done at all, it ought to be done in a very thorough, careful, and patient manner. The noble Lord who spoke just now told us that in his view great precision was not necessary. I rather shudder when I am told that work of this importance is to be done in a rough-and-ready and haphazard fashion. When he told us that, under the present system of valuation, some such proceedings were admissible, I think he rather left out of account that the great difficulty in the present case would lie in the duty which will be imposed upon these officials of dissecting the value of the premises and dividing that value between the site value of the land and the excrescences in the way of improvements and so forth upon the surface of the land.

Then I think the noble Lord left out of account the great expense which this operation must necessarily involve to the owners concerned. The owner will have to make minute researches into the records of his estate in order to satisfy himself in regard to improvements. I shall be very much surprised if any proprietor will come forward to say that facts of this kind could be collected without an investigation which will be extremely laborious and somewhat expensive besides. There is also the further point that it is quite conceivable that the finding of the assessor may not agree with the conclusions come to by the owner and his advisers, and that may lead to very troublesome and perhaps costly proceedings before the matter is finally adjusted. But, at any rate, I cannot bring myself to believe that, if this process of revaluation is, as we are told it is to be, applied to other parts of the country—for example, to the great City of London—the expense which will be occasioned will be a negligible item.

The noble and learned Lord has told us, not for the first time, that this Bill does not in itself effect any alteration in the rating system of the country. He said that for this purpose further legislation would be necessary, and he indicated that this House would have an opportunity of considering such legislation.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): Of course the Bill contemplates a future rating measure, and if a future rating measure comes up there will, of course, be opportunities of considering it. I do not enter on the constitutional question, but there is no doubt the House will have opportunities of discussing such a measure.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I am very glad the noble and learned Lord has said that; but what I desire to insist on is that we are entitled to an assurance that this House will have a real and full opportunity of discussing these new proposals whenever it is attempted to put them into force. I accentuate the words "real and full opportunity," because there have been cases lately of important financial measures, involving questions of high policy, being introduced, which this House has not had a full opportunity of discussing. The Lord President of the Council will understand that I am alluding to the £100,000 grant for school buildings, in our view a very irregular proceeding, which it was sought to legalise by tacking the proposal on to the Appropriation Bill, so that the House of Lords had either to throw out the Appropriation Bill or allow a very doubtful measure to go forward. That is not what I call a full and real opportunity.

I have been a good deal struck during this discussion by what I cannot help describing as the weakness of the foundation of fact on which the Government proposal rests. What we are told is something of this kind. Land is being held back by the owners, and the result of that is to diminish the amount of land available for building, and the result of that again is that such land as is available costs more than it would otherwise cost. Hence, it is said, arise the difficulties which are encountered in the rehousing of the population of this country. That is, I understand, the way in which the case is put. Now I am tempted to ask what evidence is there that this practice of holding back land prevails to any great extent in Scotland or indeed in any part of the United Kingdom? Is it not extraordinary that, considering the way in which this Bill was challenged, His Majesty's Ministers should not have been able to tell us, as a matter of fact, that they are satisfied that in large cities land is being perversely held back by the owners in such a manner as to retard the natural and proper development of the cities adjoining which it is to be found?

The noble Lord who introduced the Bill dealt very cautiously with the matter. He said the existing system of rating "must" tend to land being held up and "may" prove an obstacle to the development of towns, and the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack asked us to imagine the case of a man with a great property which could be built over but who kept the land back. But we are not told where these cases are to found, and I hope the noble Earl opposite who will follow me will be able to show us that there is at any rate some foundation of fact for these statements. My Lords, I go so far as to say this, that if you could show me that in this City or in any other city some obstructive millionaire was to be found who was holding back a large area essential to the proper development of the city, for his own selfish purposes, I should agree that we must find some means of dealing with him, though I should not, perhaps, admit that the particular mode suggested was the most proper one to adopt. But my view is that such cases, if they exist at all, are of rare occurrence. I cannot help believing that the much commoner case will be the case where the proprietor of building land has laid out his estate in such a manner as to provide a reasonable amount of space, air, and light round the buildings. If, however, that is the case at which this Bill is aimed, I say you are causing, not a benefit, but a very great disadvantage to the community.

I think it is clear from the statements made from time to time by members of His Majesty's Government that what some of them, at any rate, have in their minds is that you should mulct, not only the owners of undeveloped land, but also the owners of land which is not fully and sufficiently developed up to some standard of which we are not yet aware and about which I shall have a word to say in a moment. Observe what was said by the Solicitor-General for Scotland—

> "The second effect would be that men who were misusing their property, who held valuable sites upon which the buildings were allowed to fall into dilapidation and decay, or sites carrying buildings obviously unsuitable, who did not get the full value from a site—from these men there would be required an increase over the rates they paid at present."

The question arises, what is a suitable amount of building development? I want your Lordships to consider how this process advocated by the Solicitor-General might, and probably would, work. You have a proprietor of a building site on which stands a building six storeys high. You have another proprietor of a similar site on which there are no buildings at all, and you have a third proprietor who has built on his site a building only two storeys high. I want to know whether the man who has built only two storeys high is to be mulcted because he has not built up to the six-storey standard, which has found favour with his neighbour? That is a bare and somewhat crude illustration of my meaning, but I hope it will make it intelligible to the noble Earl. If, as I rather anticipate, the noble Earl will tell me that His Majesty's Government do not intend anything of the kind, then I ask him to tell us what it is they do intend, because they must have in their minds some standard at which their new system is intended to aim. If we cannot get a full explanation on that point to night I hope it will be pushed home when we get to the Committee stage.

Then one word as to the question of overcrowding in the great centres of population. I am afraid I must say that I am unable to see how these proposals would really produce any appreciable effect on that most difficult problem. If they are to produce any effect you must show two things. You must show that there really is building land available which might be brought in and built upon, and you must also show that by building upon it you would make it easier and cheaper to rehouse the population under economic conditions. I doubt very much whether either of those propositions can be made good. The case of rehousing the population does not depend so much upon the question of site values as upon the great expense of building and upon other circumstances. I was given the other day an illustration, which I believe to be a reasonable one, of the extent of relief which this new system would afford. I take a tenement in Glasgow or some other great city, the occupant of which would pay 5s. a week for it. I am told that, if it is possible to disentangle the site value, you may very fairly charge one-tenth of that 5s., or 6d., to site value. Supposing the result of the Bill was to bring down the rates in Glasgow by 33 per cent., what is the measure of relief the occupant of such a room would get? About one-third of 6d. a week—that is to say, 2d. a week. That is surely not a result for the sake of which it is worth while to revolutionise the whole system of rating.

I am afraid the real difficulty of rehousing lies far deeper than that. It arises from the fact that the waifs and strays of the population, the persons who cannot get regular employment, drift into the towns and swell that throng which the President of the Local Government Board described not long ago as an aggregation of aimless, helpless, hopeless, unemployable people who cannot pay rent for a decent class of building. You may spend your rates and erect rows of improved buildings, but people of that class cannot afford to live in them. I remember when on a visit to Glasgow last autumn I was much struck by what I found there. Glasgow, as your Lordships know, is one of the cities in which the congestion of population is most serious, and yet at the time I refer to I believe I am right in saying that there were no fewer than 15,000 empty houses in the city. That shows that the difficulty is not one of finding accommodation, but of finding accommodation suitable for the class of people you want to benefit.

Before I leave the question of overcrowding, let me say that in my opinion there are other directions in which this Bill, far from diminishing the evils of overcrowding, would tend greatly to increase those evils. Observe that your proposal is to penalise the man who does not cover every square foot of his property with bricks and mortar. What a comment that is on the movement now in force for providing public parks, open spaces, garden cities, and so forth. I read the other day a very interesting observation made by Mr. Justice Neville, who is, I understand, the chairman of the Garden Cities Association. This is what he said with regard to the proposal to tax site values—

> "No conceivable device could be hit upon more certain to make the overcrowding of the present time as nothing compared with the overcrowding of the future."

And he went on to say that his association could—

> "Not give any support whatever to any proposition which would impose a penalty upon those who were desirous to leave land available for building unbuilt upon so that there might be better breathing space for those who were more or less crowded together for the purposes of their business and for the purpose of access to the great centres."

The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack relied last night on the Report of the Housing Commission of 1885. But I am told, on what I believe to be good authority, that that Commission had not before it any evidence with regard to the withholding of land available for building owing to selfish considerations. I find moreover, not in the Report itself, but in the appendix, this remarkable statement by the late Lord Salisbury as to the proposal to tax site values—

> "It would operate as a penalty on all open spaces except those belonging to a public authority. Urban or suburban gardens would especially suffer."

I believe that to be absolutely true.

One word as to the new basis of rating which, we are told, is to be set up. The noble Lord who spoke last for His Majesty's Government told us that he had no doubt as to the inexpediency of rating undeveloped capital. That is a very valuable admission, though I wish the noble Lord had not qualified it immediately afterwards by telling us that that was exactly what His Majesty's Government proposed to do. What we are asked to do is to abandon the present system of rating, which, though it may be a rough and ready one, works well and is intelligible to everyone, for a system which has not been tried, and which, I fear, will not prove intelligible or easy to work. At present the owner of real estate pays in proportion to his stake in the district and in proportion to the services he obtains at the expense of the rates. You rate him on what you know, or approximately on what you know he has got. But in the future you are going to rate him on something which somebody else thinks that he may get some day. That is a very different thing.

The noble Lord who moved the Bill told us that what he wanted to get at was the real ground value. But the real ground value is something to be fixed for you by an assessor, who is, after all, a very human and fallible person, and who has got to project his mind into the future and conjecture a purely imaginary transaction between imaginary parties; and, as a result of that conjecture, you are given the basis on which everybody is to pay his rates. I have not that blind confidence in all public officials that His Majesty's Ministers seem to have, and my confidence in them is not increased by the fact that I find even His Majesty's Ministers themselves putting forward what seem to be fallacies of the most extraordinary description. Here is one which I have taken from the same source—it is a fertile source—the utterances of the Solicitor-General for Scotland. He announced not long ago that land—

> "Owes its value, not to the exertions or the expenditure of individual owners, but to the industry, energy, and enterprise and to the expenditure and rates of the community."

That is, if I may be allowed to say so, a most wild and extravagant doctrine. Will the noble Earl who is to follow me contend that the man who builds a house at the cost, say, of £20,000, owes the whole value of his property to the expenditure and rates of the community: I hope the noble Earl will tell us whether that is a doctrine that commends itself to him and his colleagues. If it does not, the sooner he brushes it on one side the better.

I have mentioned these points as points in regard to which we desire to get to close quarters in Committee, and it may be convenient to the noble Earl who will reply if I enumerate one or two of those as to which, I think, we are entitled to information either to-night or on some future occasion. In the first place, we shall ask for an interpretation of the standard of valuation laid down in Section 3. Do noble Lords opposite adopt the Solicitor-General's formula that the basis of every one's rates is to be the best use that he can make of his property—that is to say, the use which he would make of it if he screwed it up to to the very highest point by covering it with buildings of all sorts—or are they prepared to take into account what I may call the reasonable use of the property by an owner who has, perhaps, not attempted to develop it quite to the fullest extent.

Then, I think, we shall have to ask that, if this Bill becomes law, ample time should be given in which these valuations are to be made. It would obviously be improper that they should be hurried through with too great haste, and I hope, also, we shall be told that either in the Bill or in some supplementary regulations rules will be laid down for the guidance of the officials concerned. It seems to me most important that we should endeavour to secure uniformity of system and that this process of valuation should not proceed in a haphazard fashion, variously interpreted by various officials. And, lastly, although I do not think I need press for this, I hope we shall be told again that it is the intention of His Majesty's Government not to interfere with existing contracts.

Those are points which, I think, we shall have to press, and there are two others which are very well worthy of consideration. Is it intended to confine the operation of this Bill to limited areas, or do you desire that it should apply to the whole of Scotland? Your Lordships will not forget that the Bills which have already passed on this subject dealt merely with urban areas, and I think my noble friend behind me, Lord Mar, gave your Lordships a very appropriate description of the manner in which such a system would affect purely agricultural districts in which the unimproved value of the land might be a *minus* quantity and where, consequently, the whole, or the greater part, of the burden of the rates would be transferred from the purely agricultural part of the area and thrown upon those who are so unfortunate as to dwell in the towns and villages. And then I think we ought to consider very carefully whether some extent of local option should not be allowed to local authorities before they are compelled to put in force the provisions of the Bill. Your Lordships have seen the weighty protest that was received the other day from the city of Edinburgh, and it does seem to me that great hardship would be involved if, in such a case, a system of this sort were to be imposed on an authority that was reluctant to accept it. Upon all these points we are far from satisfied. We are glad to give the Government the opportunity of convincing us. That opportunity will most properly arise when we get into Committee. We shall then be in a much better position to deal at close quarters with all doubtful points and to decide whether this measure is one which your Lordships should send down to the other House.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, the noble Marquess stated very truly that there was a marked difference between this debate and that which took place on 26th August of last year. At that time the rejection of the Bill was moved by Lord Robertson, and it was thrown out without any protest on the part of noble Lords opposite. The noble Marquess stated that we had made a somewhat unfair use—I think that was the gist of his observations—of that rejection to attack your Lordships' House. Well, was the Bill rejected last year on the ground of date or on its merits? Lord Robertson moved the rejection of the Bill in a very powerful speech, in which he had not a good word to say for the Bill. It is perfectly true that at a later period of the debate the noble Marquess opposite called attention, as he was perfectly entitled to do, to the fact that the Bill arrived at an unconscionably late period of the session. That we fully admitted, and we expressed our regret that it should be so; but it was not stated at the time that that was the ground of objection, and certainly during the whole of the autumn and winter we were under the impression that the Bill was rejected because your Lordships considered it to be radically bad.

There are still two lines of criticism. One is of an entirely uncompromising kind, adopted by the noble Viscount who moved the rejection and others. On the other hand, noble Lords who spoke on the Front Bench opposite have taken a different attitude. They have expressed a willingness to see the Bill read a second time, and they have not disputed the fact that the present system of rating—which presumably the noble Lord who moved the rejection believes to be the best in the world—has defects which demand attention. Lord Balfour, as we know, was a member of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, and as one of the authors of the famous Minority Report he has admitted the propriety of a separate taxation of sites.

Lord Lansdowne asks us what is the basis on which we propose to proceed in this matter—is it to be capital value or annual value? From one point of view the two things can be regarded as the same. If you are content to regard capital value as a certain number of years purchase, it does not very much matter which you choose as your basis. You may assume that there are three fairly similar sites, one perhaps with an hotel upon it which pays £1,000 a year, and the site may be taken as worth £30,000—that is to say, 30 years purchase. You may have a site close by less fully and profitably occupied bringing in a rental of £500 a year; that may be worth £20,000, or 40 years purchase. You may have another site bringing only in £100; it may be worth £15,000, or 150 years purchase. But I have not understood that the noble Lord, Lord Balfour, stipulates that in no circumstances in rating is anything to be taken into consideration except the rent actually paid. That is to say that if a building site is covered with thistles, that it ought to be rated only at the value which land covered with thistles brings in. Having studied that Minority Report carefully, that is not the conclusion I draw from it. I do not know what the personal opinion of the noble Lord may be, but certainly I should never have gathered that the able gentlemen responsible for that Report altogether dismissed the idea of taxation apart from the actual rent brought in at the moment.

The noble Marquess used arguments to show that from the most important of all points of view—that of housing—little good could be expected from any rating reform in the direction which it is generally assumed we shall follow. But the noble Marquess used two arguments which are mutually destructive. One is that if you place any considerable portion of the rate on the site, the rates in the centre of the town will be so high that those who own the land will be compelled to place on it buildings of a much greater height, so that there will be more congestion than ever. The other argument is that the rating of unoccupied land in the suburbs will also be increased and all open spaces will be abolished. I cannot see how both things can be true, and it seems to me exceedingly doubtful whether either is.

As to the central part, it must be remembered that the most valuable sites are not inhabited by poor people at all; and as to the building of skyscrapers, you have the protection of the Building Acts; and in most cases it will be by no means economic to pull down existing houses to build taller ones on the sites. As to the suburbs, I certainly thought that it was a matter of common agreement among all people interested in land reform that nothing more michievous could be done than to force into the market, by a rate or tax, all the land that lies vacant, without regulations as to how it is to be used. It is perfectly evident that if you merely went to work and rated all unoccupied land and threw it into the market at the mercy of speculators some of the bad results indicated might very easily follow. But by town-planning and insistence on open spaces, it would be perfectly easy to provide against the evils that would follow a crude and thoughtless plunge into this question of rating.

The noble Marquess asked whether land was held up in the neighbourhood of towns. He asked whether we could name instances. Well, can he name any instance to the contrary? I put the matter in that way because it is the invariable practice of those with building estates near towns to have them nibbled off piece by piece at high values when the demand is at the greatest. If in years past landowners would have been content to sell their building land in large blocks for sums which might seem to be comparatively little compared with what would be realised by the slow process of selling inch by inch, if they had done that and put the money by, they would often be as well off as if they had held on to the land and sold it little by little.

I have an instance. Such a case is that of the Garden City at Letchworth. It was owing to the low price paid for it, although I have no doubt the price paid the owner very well, that it was found possible to build houses at reasonable rents. Then there is the Hampstead Garden suburb, which consists of 240 acres of land, the property of the trustees of Eton College. I have no hesitation in saying that an ordinary landowner owning that estate would have gone to work in the usual way, gradually developing it and getting, in the course of fifty years, something like £1,500 or £2,000 an acre. The Eton College trustees, anxious to encourage this experiment, sold the whole 240 acres at a price which no doubt seems low for land near London; but I believe they not only acted in a public-spirited way, but in a way which was in perfect conformity with their interests. That is my answer to what the noble Marquess said. I do not say that it is the practice to hold up land in a dramatic way, which leaves people struggling to get a square yard here and there; but the whole system of developing town properties in this country has been piecemeal and haphazard, and most mischievous in its results.

My noble friend on the cross benches asked a question yesterday as to why Scotland was chosen as the subject of this new legislation. It might be an answer, though I admit not a good one, to say that we must begin somewhere, and that the reasons for starting in Scotland are as good as those for starting in England. But I think the reasons are even better; because there exists in Scotland a complete apparatus available for complete valuation. There is a staff of assessors and everything is ready to hand. In England there are no assessors, and all that machinery which exists in Scotland would have to be brought into existence here. That supplies some answer to the question that my noble friend asks.

EARL ROSEBERY: My noble relative has not quite stated my question correctly. I asked why a Scottish Bill should be founded on an English argument.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My impression is that the noble Lord who introduced the Bill dealt very freely with Scottish arguments. I admit that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack used various English illustrations, but if they were germane, as I believe they were, to the subject, he was entitled to do so. Another question asked is, "Why apply this Bill to rural subjects at all?" and the noble Marquess asked us what explanation we gave of the basis of valuation contained in sub-section 1 of Clause 3 of the Bill. It is true that exception may be taken to the wording of the clause. When that clause was originally introduced in another place it contained, if I may use a phrase well-known in another connection, a time limit. It only applied to a date twenty years back. Exception was taken to this by Mr. Balfour on a ground which was admitted to have a certain amount of substance by those in charge of the measure, and the time limit was in consequence withdrawn. I think it is only right to mention that when the impossibility of carrying out the particular valuation under this sub-section is argued as it has been by more than one noble Lord.

It is said, no doubt with truth, that the effect of applying the Bill to rural districts would be to transfer to some extent the burden of rates upon purely agricultural land to subjects of a more accommodating character; and no doubt in rural districts that would be the general effect. But it seems to me to be strange to hear a complaint of that kind in your Lordships' House. I have always believed that one particular grievance dwelt on by noble Lords is the hardship with which the rates fall on purely agricultural land, and I had hoped that any measure which had a tendency to relieve agricultural land at the expense of urban or semi-urban property would rather be welcomed by those to whom the interests of agriculture are particularly dear.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: Even if we do not think the redistribution fair?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: That, of course, must be purely a matter of opinion. We are not likely to propose anything which we consider unfair, and there will no doubt be plenty of opportunity for arguing the matter. The noble Marquess said something on the question of cost, but this point has been fully dealt with by my noble friend the Colonial Secretary. It is no doubt true that you can go to any expense you like if you choose to employ sufficiently expensive people to make the valuation; but, as far as rural valuations are concerned, there is no reason to suppose that on any ordinary estate ample material does not exist enabling the landowners to make the valuation required with little trouble or cost.

The noble Marquess referred to Amendments which he desired to see proposed. One of them dealt with this question of including rural districts, and Lord St. Aldwyn mentioned the possibility of proceeding by way of experiment and instituting a kind of local option. I do not profess to be profoundly informed on this subject, but I should have thought that there was a certain amount of danger in instituting a local option. If there were local option as to this Bill, the pressure might be put upon the authorities to apply local option to the principle upon which rating is to be carried out. That is a prospect from which I myself should shrink. I think that this ought to be a great national and uniform system, and if you begin now applying it partially you may find that the result which I have indicated, a most undesirable one in my opinion, might possibly follow.

The noble Marquess asked us what facilities would be given for the discussion of the Bill brought in to deal with the question of rating. I cannot give an answer offhand, but I can safely say that any rating Bill brought in in consequence of the passing of this measure will be brought forward in the usual way, and passed through your Lordships' House in the usual manner. I will not go into the questions that are more suitable for treatment by Amendments in Committee, such as the officials to be employed and appeal from the assessors to some superior Court. But I am able to satisfy the noble Lords opposite as to existing contracts, and to repeat the declarations made by the Prime

Minister, the Lord Advocate, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the preservation of existing contracts. We are gratified, as well as slightly amused, at the sigh of relief which went up from noble Lords opposite when they discovered that His Majesty's Government did not entertain in their entirety the views on land questions of the late Mr. Henry George.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: Or of the Solicitor-General for Scotland.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I have no reason to suppose that the Solicitor-General holds the views entertained by the late Mr. Henry George. That sigh of relief was perhaps a little stagey, for noble Lords opposite know perfectly well that the Government do not entertain those views. If it is any satisfaction to noble Lords opposite, all those sitting on the Front Government Bench are willing to rise one after another and to make a solemn declaration to that effect. At the same time, we do believe, as my noble and learned friend on the Woolsack said, that there is a real and substantial grievance in this matter. It may not be easy to meet that grievance in its entirety, for the matter is one of great difficulty and great complication. But unless you are prepared to say that the present system is the best possible and that we should leave it alone, no other plan or method has been suggested for readjusting the incidence of rates except by something which must be founded on provisions such as those we are asking your Lordships to give assent to. It is perfectly true, we frankly admit, that a great many other things of which we do not approve might also be founded on such a measure. But that is not the point. If you are to do anything at all you must proceed, first of all, by making the valuation proposed, and that is why we ask your Lordships to read the Bill a second time.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: My Lords, may I be permitted to state, in a very few words, the view I take of this Bill which we are now asked to read a second time? When we are asked to give a Second Reading to a Bill the acceptability or otherwise of the measure depends entirely upon its principle. It is on the principle of the Bill that the House gives its verdict. What then, my Lords, is the principle of this Bill? It was described by the noble Viscount who moved its rejection as embodying the views regarding land of the late Mr. Henry George. Lord Saltoun used the same language. He told us that it was a Henry George Bill, and one of the worst projects ever introduced into your Lordships' House. I hold in my hand an extract from a petition which I presented two or three days ago from the landowners of Falkirk and adjoining districts, and this is what they say as regards the principle of the Bill—

> "The principle of the Bill is revolutionary; it revolutionises the Scottish assessment system which has been going on quietly for the last fifty years, and puts into force the principles of Mr. Henry George for the confiscation of land."

Everything, I think, shows that this is the tendency of the measure. What was Mr. Henry George's policy? It so happened that some fifteen or twenty years ago I received, quite unexpectedly, a telegram from America asking, "What do you think of Henry George's policy? I did not know why the telegram had been sent to me. Possibly Mr. Henry George was standing for some position or another in America at the time. At any rate, 200 words of a reply had been prepaid. My answer to the telegram was a simple one; 200 words was quite unnecessary. My reply was—

> "A simple appeal to the predatory instincts of primitive man."

That is a true definition of the policy at the back of this Bill. We are asked to swallow a measure containing this evil principle. I for my part am not prepared to do so, and I trust that my noble friend will stand to his guns and take a division against the Bill. It is the best thing you can do for your Party and for this House, because the country will then know that they have a body of men who will stand between them and the policy of Henry George. If my noble friend, as I hope he will, divides the House, I shall have pleasure in telling with him.

VISCOUNT RIDLEY: My Lords, before the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack puts the Question, may I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment? I am not convinced by what has fallen from the noble Marquess on the Front Bench or from other noble Lords who have argued that you can convert this into a workable Bill, but I am of opinion that their experience is entitled to respect and that the experiment may be tried in Committee of endeavouring to make the Bill workable. But I would remind the noble Earl who has just sat down that, if the Bill is not made workable in Committee, there will be another opportunity on Third Reading for the House to express its opinion.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS: Do you run away from your Motion?

VISCOUNT RIDLEY: I withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave of the House, withdrawn; Then the original Motion agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

SUNDAY CLOSING (SHOPS) BILL. [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

LORD ORANMORE and BROWNE moved to omit, from the beginning of Paragraph (*a*) in sub section 1 of Clause 3, the words "The opening or keeping open of any shop solely for the purposes of any of the trades," and to insert the words, "The sale or offering for sale of any of the articles." He explained that the object of this Amendment, and of the consequential Amendments following it, was to allow small shops which could not be said to belong to any special trade, but which catered for many wants, to be kept open. There were, he said, many such all over England. In Barrow-in-Furness alone small shops of this kind were kept by fifty-three widows with eighty-two children dependent on them, and by ten women with infirm husbands and thirty-four children dependent upon them. It was doubtful whether, under the clause as it stood, these persons would be able to open their shops on Sunday.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 26, to leave out from the beginning of paragraph (*a*) to the word 'mentioned' in line 27, and to insert the words 'The sale or offering for sale of any of the articles.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

LORD AVEBURY thought he could convince the noble Lord of the undesirability of pressing the Amendment. The words in the clause were those agreed to by the Committee of their Lordships' House who examined very carefully into the whole question, and great danger was involved in altering the wording of a measure which had been carefully drafted, unless there was certainty that the Amendment had been considered in reference to the drafting of the rest of the Bill. As a matter of fact, the Amendment would not carry out the object the noble Lord had in view, for Clause 3 was not the clause which prohibited the opening of shops on Sunday. Their Lordships had already passed Clause 1, which effected that object. Clause 3 dealt with special exemptions for scheduled trades. Therefore, the effect of the Amendment would be to enable the shopkeeper in question to sell his goods on Sunday, but he could not sell them in the shop, as by Clause 1 he was prohibited from opening the shop on that day.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE moved to amend Paragraph (*b*) of the first sub section of Clause 3—

"(*b*) As respects the area of any local authority, the opening of such shops or classes of shops for the sale of such articles or classes of articles as may be allowed under any resolution for the time being in force of that authority up to nine in the forenoon, or such earlier hour as may be specified in the resolution."

by substituting the words "eleven in the forenoon" for the words "nine in the forenoon." The opponents of the Bill desired to fix one o'clock; he thought eleven o'clock would be a fair compromise. The working classes laboured very hard all the week, and naturally desired a little rest on the Sunday morning; but, if no shops were allowed to be open after nine o'clock on that morning, they would be prevented from purchasing food unless they got up very early. It was true that the Committee had reported in favour of the hour of nine, but he would like to know if any of the local authorities had expressed an opinion on that point. It must be remembered that this was practically new legislation, and it was, therefore, very desirable not to begin too strictly. He suggested that the hour of eleven should be inserted to see how it worked, and if it were found to be unduly late it could be subsequently altered.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 2, line 13, to leave out the word 'nine' and to insert the word 'eleven.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

LORD AVEBURY hoped that here again the noble Lord would not press his Amendment. The question of the hour had been very carefully considered, not only by the Committee of their Lordships' House, but also by the shopkeepers' associations, more than 400 of which were in favour of the provision as it now stood in the Bill. The noble Lord had asked whether any local authorities had expressed their opinion on the subject. The Bill was supported by the corporations of Belfast, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough and Swansea, by the Urban District Councils Association representing 490 urban districts, and by the corporations of Edinburg, Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, and over fifty other Scottish towns. If the Amendment were carried the shopkeepers concerned and their assistants would be precluded from attending any place of worship on Sunday morning, and the first half of the day would be completely gone. He submitted that the shopkeepers were entitled to one day's rest a week, and contended that the provision in the clause as it stood was ample. Moreover, the great bulk of the working men were paid early on Saturday, and had sufficient time on that day for obtaining the necessaries of life.

LORD ASHBOURNE thought the noble Lord would be well advised in not pressing the Amendment. Even if the hour of eleven were inserted, he was disposed to think that the local authorities would avail themselves of the power given in the section and fix an earlier hour. Nine o'clock was, in his opinion, the outside time that would be allowed by any local authority.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE moved to delete the words "or herbalist" from the subsection providing that nothing in the Act should prevent—

> "The sale by any pharmaceutical chemist or chemists and druggist or herbalist of any drugs, medicines, or surgical appliances, or the sale of any article by the occupier of any premises, or the servant or agent of any such occupier, to any person lodging upon such premises."

He believed there was no legal definition of a herbalist, and that the exemption in this case was unwise.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 2, line 21, to leave out the words 'or herbalist.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

LORD AVEBURY said herbalists were anxious to be included in the Bill. These men dealt in vegetable compounds which might or might not have the efficacious results claimed for them, but certainly they were not injurious. No person could sell drugs or medicines unless he was specially qualified.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The noble Lord is quite correct in saying that they cannot sell drugs and medicines. They cannot sell poisons. The restriction only applies to poisonous substances scheduled in the Pharmacy Act.

LORD AVEBURY was of opinion that, as herbalists could not sell poisons, there could be no objection to their inclusion.

LORD ASHBOURNE deprecated legislation for such a small and unknown class as herbalists, and suggested that Lord Avebury should make inquiries before the next stage of the Bill as to whether it was absolutely necessary to retain them.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I think this provision is inserted in the interests of the poor. There are a very large number of herbalists, considerably more than the noble and learned Lord imagines, and a great many of them—I hope most of them—ply a perfectly harmless trade. They are not, of course, recognised in the way that a chemist and druggist is. They have no *status* of that kind, but they are to a certain extent in many districts the poor man's chemist, and I think no harm would be done by leaving them in the Bill.

LORD AVEBURY undertook that if the Amendment were withdrawn he would consider the point before the next stage of the Bill.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

*LORD SWAYTHLING moved, as an Amendment to Clause 5, which provided that the Sunday Observation Prosecution Act, 1871, should apply to prosecutions for offences under the Bill as it applied to prosecutions under the Sunday Observance Act, 1677, the insertion of the following words: "Provided always that, where the person alleged to have committed the offence being a person professing the Jewish religion: (1) Has not kept his shop open for the purpose of his trade, or sold or exposed or offered for sale any article from sunset on the Friday to sunset on the Saturday immediately preceding the alleged offence; and (2) has not employed for the purpose of his trade on the Sunday on which the offence is alleged to have been committed any person other than a person professing the Jewish religion, the consent required by the Sunday Observation Prosecution Act, 1871, shall not be given unless the offence shall have been committed after the hour of 3 p.m. on such Sunday." This Amendment had, he said, been framed in concert with the board of deputies which represented the Jews in the United Kingdom and in the Colonies. It was also founded on the unanimous Report of the Select Committee on Sunday Trading, who recommended that an endeavour should be made to effect a compromise in favour of the Jews. He was also encouraged to hope that the Amendment would be accepted by the words of sympathy expressed by several noble Lords on the Second Reading of the Bill. Lord Avebury had stated on the Second Reading that Jews could work on Saturday nights. In the summer, however, the Jewish Sabbath terminated at nine o'clock, and therefore the facility referred to by Lord Avebury would be almost useless; and in the winter they had to cease work at four o'clock on Friday afternoons. Hitherto the Jewish community had been successful in maintaining their own poor and in keeping Jews out of the workhouse. If the Bill passed without Amendment it would reduce to poverty many thousands of Jews who were already on the verge of pauperism, and the Jewish community would have very great difficulty in maintaining them. His sole object in moving the Amendment was to enable his people to remain self-supporting.

Amendment moved—

"In line 34, after '1677' to insert the words 'Provided always that where the person alleged to have committed the offence being a person professing the Jewish religion (1) has not kept his shop open for the purpose of his trade, or sold or exposed or offered for sale any article from sunset on the Friday to sunset on the Saturday immediately preceding the alleged offence; and (2) has not employed for the purpose of his trade on the Sunday on which the offence is alleged to have been committed any person other than a person professing the Jewish religion, the consent required by the Sunday Observation Prosecution Act, 1871, shall not be given unless the offence shall have been committed after the hour of three p.m. on such Sunday.'"—(*Lord Swaythling.*)

LORD AVEBURY could not agree to an Amendment the effect of which would be to close the Christian shops on the whole of Sunday and leave to a small number of Jewish shops the opportunity of obtaining the whole of the Sunday trade. This question had been very carefully considered by the shopkeepers themselves, and they submitted to their Lordships that it would be very unfair to them to adopt the proposal contained in the Amendment. The noble Lord had spoken of Jews having to close till nine o'clock on Saturday evenings during a part of the year, but that would only be a very small part of the year. The needs of the Jews had been carefully considered by a Joint Committee of both Houses, who reported as follows—

> "The Committee must draw attention to the case of the Jews, with whom they have much sympathy. They would be glad if a compromise could be found. The Committee have been informed that any measure will be opposed which does not expressly permit those Jews who close on Saturday to open on Sunday. Such an arrangement, on the other hand, would probably be opposed by the shopkeeping community as a whole, and the Committee cannot recommend it."

That was the decision arrived at by the Joint Committee which very carefully considered the particular proposal now before the Committee. An endeavour had been made to meet the needs of the Jews in a subsequent provision, any Amendment to which would be most carefully considered. In the circumstances he hoped their Lordships would not accept the Amendment.

LORD ASHBOURNE thought something might be done under Clause 6 to meet the case submitted by Lord Swaythling.

THE LORD STEWARD (Earl BEAUCHAMP) said it would, perhaps, be for the convenience of their Lordships that he should explain the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to this Amendment, and, generally, with regard to the Bill. The Government did not propose to exercise such influence as they possessed in the discussion of the Bill. In view of the fullness of their legislative programme, there was no possibility of giving facilities to the measure in the other House, and the discussion was therefore merely academic. If it had been otherwise, the Home Office would have put down Amendments to the Bill; to have taken that course in the present circumstances would, the Home Secretary felt, only have imposed a hard task on officials who were already overworked. On the Second Reading he had ventured to say that it would be in the practical application of this Bill that the difficulties would come in. He thought it was obvious to everyone that there was an immense difficulty with regard to the Jews which had not yet been met. To the Jews in the East End of London the matter was of almost vital importance. For himself he could only repeat the hope upon which the Duke of Northumberland poured so much scorn on the Second Reading, that some compromise might yet be arrived at. It did not seem to him that Lord Avebury had yet succeeded in devising arrangements which would remove the opposition of the Jews.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH regarded the announcement to which the Committee had just listened as rather unsatisfactory. They were constantly under the difficulty of not being able to have legislation originated in sufficient time in their Lordships' House. Here was a Bill brought in, after inquiry by a Select Committee, very early in the session when there was ample time. But they were now told that there was no use proceeding with it because the officials of the Home Office were so overworked that apparently between now and June they would not be able to formulate the Amendments which the Government thought should be inserted. He was fully aware of the difficulty of the subject. He agreed that there was a grievance as shown in the Amendment, but if they were never to see the Amendments which the Home Office would like inserted they would never advance the matter. Surely one of the most important steps in the direction of the compromise which everybody professed to desire would be that at some time or another the Home Office should apply their mind to the subject and let it be seen what it was they suggested. He thought the best course would be to adjourn the Committee, and resume when the Home Office had had sufficient leisure to formulate their Amendments.

LORD AVEBURY promised to consider whatever suggestions might be made on behalf of the Jewish community, but as the proposal now before the Committee had been carefully considered and rejected by the Joint Committee, he hoped the noble Lord would not press it.

LORD SWAYTHLING observed that under the Bill there would still be a good many shops allowed to be open on Sundays, and he thought that room for a compromise might be found later concerning Jewish shops which supplied the necessaries of life.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY said the point was not that the Home Office officials had not had the necessary time to prepare Amendments, but that the Government and the House of Commons were overworked; and as it was impossible to find time for this Bill, the Home Office had not desired to waste the time of their officials in drafting Amendments which could have no practical effect. He could not help feeling that the Jews had a just claim for a definite and substantial clause in the Bill. The whole atmosphere of the reign of Charles II. was very different from the atmosphere of the present day, and as the Jews closed their shops on the Saturday, he did not see why they should be prevented from trading at any rate during a portion of the Sunday.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Lord ORANMORE and BROWNE moved to insert the necessary authorities for applying the Bill in Scotland and Ireland. He explained that he was following the precedent of the Shop Hours Act, 1904.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 35, after the word 'apply' to insert the words 'in England' and after the word 'State' to insert the words 'in Scotland to the Secretary for Scotland, and in Ireland to the Lord-Lieutenant.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord AVEBURY accepted the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7:

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule:

Lord ORANMORE and BROWNE moved to omit the words "sweets for immediate consumption," and to insert "sweatmeats, fruit, and cooked fish, meat and eggs." The sale of these articles on Sundays was for the benefit principally of cheap trippers, and it would be very hard if they could not procure the articles mentioned in his Amendment. Moreover, they should be permitted to take them away for consumption on the sea-shore or elsewhere, but this they would be prevented from doing by the retention of the words "for immediate consumption." As to meat, he meant, of course, cooked meat.

Amendment moved—

"In line 15, to leave out the words 'sweets for immediate consumption' and to insert the words 'sweetmeats, fruit, and cooked fish, meat and eggs.'"—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord AVEBURY was prepared to accept "sweetmeats" instead of "sweets," but the other words seemed unnecessary. Cooked fish, meat, and eggs would come under the term "refreshments," and to specify certain particular refreshments of which there could be no doubt might be held to exclude others.

Lord SWAYTHLING: Raw meat is not in the Schedule.

Lord AVEBURY: The noble Lord explained that he meant cooked, not raw meat.

Lord ORANMORE and BROWNE said it seemed to him that the words were required.

Lord AVEBURY stated that it was certainly intended that all these refreshments should be allowed to be sold during the whole of the day. He thought there could be no doubt about it; but if the noble Lord would postpone the Amendment he would consult the draftsman.

Lord ASHBOURNE thought that as the Schedule stood, there was a doubt on the subject, and he was glad that Lord Avebury intended to confer with the draftsman upon it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 41.)

SMALL HOLDINGS.

THE EARL OF STRADBROKE: My Lords, I rise to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries whether the Board concur in the opinion given by the Law Officers of the Crown that, where county councils purchase small holdings for the purpose of their being let, the Act requires the rent to be fixed at such reasonable amount as will recoup the purchase money, as well as the interest, on the loan raised to provide it; and whether the effect of such recoupment would not result in county councils acquiring estates at the expense of the small holders; and further, whether the President of the Board will take immediate steps to remedy such an injustice.

My reason for putting these Questions to the noble Earl is that the county council of which I am a member are anxious to know their exact position before they enter upon any scheme for the purchase of land for small holdings. Since I first placed my Question on the Paper the Board of Agriculture have informed the County Councils Association that they will not raise any objection to county councils letting land to small holders, although the rent does not include any recoupment of the purchase money. But we must bear in mind that we have the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, in which they state clearly that the purchase money must be included in the rent charged to the small holders. We also have a Treasury Minute, issued on 31st December last, laying down certain rules and regulations which must be followed by county councils to put themselves in a position to obtain relief from the Imperial Exchequer for any loss they may incur in carrying out the Small Holdings Act. Your Lordships will remember that in the Act of 1907 there was a certain amount of overlapping of the Act of 1892 with regard to holdings that exceed one acre and do not exceed five acres, and it was left to county councils to decide whether those holdings should be considered as allotments or small holdings. In July, 1893, the Board of Agriculture issued a Circular in which they stated that they had obtained the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown that the purchase money should not be included in the rent asked of allotment holders. Therefore, if county councils decide that a small holding not exceeding five acres should be considered as an allotment they can act under that ruling. If, on the other hand, the small holdings come under the Act of 1907 it will be necessary for county councils to put such a rent upon them as would cover the sinking fund for the purchase money.

It may, perhaps, be said that this is not a very large matter, and that the amount added to the rent would be inconsiderable; but that would be presuming that the full period of eighty years would be allowed for the repayment of the money advanced by the Local Government Board for the purchase of the land and for equipment. Of course we do not know that the full period of eighty years will always be granted; and there might be included in the purchase money the amount required, not merely for the purchase of the land, but also for the erection of houses, buildings, fences, etc., and, perhaps, for a water supply, so that the amount might be a very considerable one. It is for these reasons that I have ventured to put these Questions on the Paper, and I hope the reply of the noble Earl will be such as to enable county councils clearly to understand what position they are to take, and how they are to keep themselves within the law and within the Treasury Minute to which I have referred.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, I am asked, in the first place, whether the Board of Agriculture concur in the opinion given by the Law Officers of the Crown, that where county councils purchase small holdings for the purpose of their being let, the Act requires the rent to be fixed at such reasonable amount as will recoup the purchase money, as well as the interest on the loan raised to provide it. The answer is in the affirmative. The Small Holdings Act of 1907 requires that the purchase money must be recouped, and the interest as well, by way of sinking fund. That was laid down in the Small Holdings Act of 1892. Clause 18, subsection 1, provided that—

> "A county council shall not acquire land save at such price that all expenses will be recouped, in the case of land let, out of the rent."

Parliament agreed that the term of repayment should be extended to eighty years, and spread over that period the amount does not constitute a very great addition to the rent.

Next, the noble Earl asked whether the effect of such recoupment would not result in county councils acquiring estates at the expense of the small holders. Of course that is so, but to minimise the apparent hardship—it is not really a hardship—it is provided in the Act of 1907 that county councils should be able compulsorily to hire land for thirty-five years, subject to a renewal at the end of that term and a new rent to be determined by valuation. There will be no objection if the county councils choose to pay the sum themselves out of the rates; and I venture to think the ratepayers could hardly complain; as they eventually acquire this land at a small annual outlay spread over a very long period of years. Some county councils in England object to putting anything on the rates, and it was absolutely necessary, in order to get the Bill through, to give a distinct pledge that if a county council so desired there should be no charge on the rates whatever. It must be remembered, also, that county councils can borrow money at a lower rate of interest than private individuals, and this enables them to let the land at lower rents than would otherwise be the case. Finally, the noble Earl asks whether I will take immediate steps to remedy the injustice. I think I have shown that there can hardly be any injustice. The men all over England are perfectly prepared to pay the small annual addition to the rent necessary to meet the sinking fund charges. There is very little hardship, and certainly no injustice.

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW: I am afraid I cannot say that I am satisfied with the answer which the noble Earl has given. The noble Earl minimised the whole matter as if it were a question involving the small holder in a very small expenditure. He compared the Act of 1892 with the Act of 1907, but the Act of 1892 enables county councils to buy land and re-sell it by instalments to the small holder, and, obviously, it was quite proper that a sufficient sum should be paid by the tenant to refund to the county council the cost of the purchase of the land as well as the rents for small holdings. But in the Act of 1907 there is no such power to re-sell, and yet we are told that the county council is only to let the land at such a rent as will recoup it, not only for the interest on the purchase money, but provide a sinking fund, so that, at the end of eighty years, the county council can enter into possession at the expense of the tenants. That seems to me a most extraordinary proposition.

EARL CARRINGTON: The noble Earl knows very well that if the Bill had not been brought forward in that form there would have been no chance of its passing into law. The answer to my noble friend is that there can be no injustice in the matter. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Hundreds and thousands of applications for land are coming in, but not in one case in a hundred is there a desire to purchase the land. The Act is working extremely well, and it seems an extraordinary thing at this time of day my noble friend should get up and throw stones at the Act which he was largely instrumental in passing.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: We did not understand that at the time.

THE IMPORTATION OF HAY AND STRAW.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend Lord Clinton I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, he has considered the question of prohibiting the importation into this country of hay and straw used for packing.

EARL CARRINGTON: My Lords, as regards this question, perhaps I may be permitted to recall the attention of the House to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Edinburgh in February last.

We were fortunate enough to stamp it out successfully, and it was discovered that the disease was introduced through some hay imported from Holland. The question was, ought hay and straw imported from infected countries to be prohibited, and, if so, to what extent? I looked up the precedents, and found that my predecessors in 1885 and 1892, and, I believe, in other years, decided that such action should not be taken. In another place some hon. Members, who really ought to know better, blamed me for not at once prohibiting the importation of hay and straw from infected countries. They said it only required a mere stroke of the pen, and ought to have been done at once. The present Government are entirely opposed to anything like panic legislation, and as the imports of hay and straw for fodder and litter alone amounted in 1906 to £400,000, I thought it was my duty to satisfy my colleagues that there was no undue proportion between the danger of infection and the loss of trade resulting from the prohibition of this hay and straw—that is to say that the premium for insurance must not be an unreasonable amount. This straw is not pressed straw. It is subject to light and air, which, I am informed on the best authority, is fatal to the preservation of the virus which produces infection, so that the risk of infection is, to say the least of it, problematical, and not sufficient to justify what would be a great disturbance in the trades concerned. I have done, and will do, all in my power to maintain the health of our live stock under proper conditions, but I am not prepared, and I absolutely decline, to be a party to any panic legislation or to harass persons connected with legitimate trades by restrictions which, in our opinion, are useless and uncalled for.

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL. [H.L.].

A Bill to consolidate enactments relating to the Post Office—Was presented by the Lord Granard (*E. Granard*); read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 42.]

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 26*th March*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDERS 66 AND 67 NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 66 and 67 have not been complied with, viz.:—

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—Ordered, that the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Dublin Corporation (Various Powers) Bill (by Order).—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.—Bill withdrawn.

Draycott Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, &c., Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Finsbury Park, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Grays; Salisbury; Tetbury; Weymouth; and Wishaw; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberdeen; Ainsdale; Batley; London; Lostwithiel; Manchester; North Shields; and Southsea; to lie upon the Table.

MORAY FIRTH (ILLEGAL TRAWLING).

Petitions for prevention: From Buckie; Gardenstown; and Portessie; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Nantwich; and Wood Green; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of List of Public Elementary Schools and Certified Efficient Schools in Wales and Monmouthshire on 1st August 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 24th February; Mr. Barrie]; to lie upon the Table.

COURT OF PROBATE DIVISION (HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE) (IRELAND).

Annual Account presented, of Receipts and Disbursements for the year ended 31st December 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SOUTH AFRICA.

Copy presented, of correspondence relating to the Recruitment of Labour in the Nyasaland Protectorate for the Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia Mines [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LUNACY (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of General Rules for the management of the Edinburgh District Asylum at Bangour [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Belfast Telegraphic Delays.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether a recent rearrangement of internal work in the Belfast post office has led to delay and considerable inaccuracy in the transmission of press and other telegrams; and, if so, whether he will reconsider the new arrangement under which the staff are required to take part-duty only in telegraphic work and the remainder in ordinary postal work; and whether it is customary in important offices such as Belfast to have a full staff of expert telegraphists on duty during the hours in which pressure of messages usually occurs.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The hon. Member has been misinformed. I am assured that there is no foundation for the statement that there has been delay or error in the transmission of telegrams at Belfast. Under the new arrangement which came into force on the 4th instant, the staff are not required "to take part-duty only in telegraphic work and the remainder in ordinary postal work"; but on the contrary, telegraph staff have been employed on telegraph duties only and postal staff on postal duties only. A sufficient staff of expert telegraphists is on duty at Belfast at all periods of the day.

Kilcornan Evicted Farm.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say what is the cause of delay on the part of the Estates Commissioners in reinstating Mrs. Scully in the farm from which her husband, Daniel Scully, deceased, of Kilbreedy, Kilcornan, in the County of Limerick, was evicted by the Reverend John T. Waller.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) In December, 1903, the Estates Commissioners received an application for reinstatement from Daniel Scully. Their inspector reported, in April 1907, that Scully had since died and that his family could not be traced, but it was subsequently ascertained that Mrs. Scully and a daughter were living in Limerick. The Commissioners have been negotiating for the purchase of the holding, and have now been informed that the Reverend J. T. Waller is willing to accept their estimated price.

Coolcappa Untenanted Lands.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have entered into negotiations for the purchase of the untenanted lands at Mount Henry, Coolcappa, in the County of Limerick, on the Delmege property; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have furnished to the owner a preliminary estimate of the price they would be prepared to offer for the untenanted lands in question, but the owner has not yet replied to the offer.

Shanagolden Untenanted Lands.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have entered into negotiations with Colonel Dickson for the for the purchase of his untenanted lands at Creeves, Shanagolden, in the County of Limerick; and, if so, whether any agreement has been arrived at.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estate Commissioners are negotiating with Colonel W. D. Dickson for the purchase of about 286 acres of untenanted land in the townland of Lackanagoneeny; but the lands of Creeves do not appear to be included in the property offered for sale.

Bourse Gambling.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether, in addition to the particulars of the various foreign governments' legislative measures against bourse gambling, he will also obtain a copy of the Egyptian Bourse Bill, as assented to by the Powers, which has lately become law in Egypt, as well as the particulars of the special Anti-Option Bill in the United States, as prepared by Congressman Hepburn, and lay the same upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) Steps are being taken to procure copies of the legislative measures to which the hon. Member refers.

Redirection of Lodgers' Letters.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): To ask the Postmaster-General, whether he can now consider the possibility of authorising the redirection of letters of lodgers in cases where the person has given notice to the Post Office on his removal that he will be prepared to pay a fee for the redirection and delivery of his letters at the new address.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) This question has recently been carefully considered; but in view of the practical difficulties which present themselves, I regret that I do not see my way to extend to lodgers the privilege of redirection even on payment of a fee.

Post Office Telegraph Overseers.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether a circular has been issued to surveyors instructing them to reduce the positions of overseers in the telegraph department, and suggesing that the Secretary of the Post Office is prepared to abolish all such appointments created by the Stanley revision; and if the circular has been published with his knowledge and sanction.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) No such circular has been issued.

Indian Public Companies.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India propose to introduce any legislation similar in character to that of the English Companies Act of 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) No such proposal has been submitted to me. The Indian Government may be disposed to wait until the Law of this country on the subject of joint stock companies has been consolidated in a single statute before they deal with the question.

Indian Garrison.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Royal Commission which sat shortly after the Mutiny, to consider the question of the forces necessary for the protection of India, advised that 80,000 British troops were required; and whether that number has ever been reached, or is at present serving in the Empire.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) My hon. friend has correctly stated the advice of the Royal Commission. The figure 80,000 has never been reached. The latest Returns from India show a strength of about 75,000 officers and men.

Indian Immigration.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India has given due effect to his instructions to make widely known in India the circumstances in respect of Indian immigration which at present obtain in Canada; and whether, if necessary, he will supplement these instructions, in view of the fact that British-Indian subjects still continue to arrive in Canada, where their reception is unsatisfactory.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The Government of India have made the facts widely known, and have taken special steps to warn intending emigrants The whole subject is receiving my careful attention.

Kushtia—Attempted Assassination of Mr. Hickinbotham.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he can give the House any information regarding the attempted assassination early in this month by a Bengali of Mr. Hickinbotham, of the Church Missionary Society, at Kushtia; and whether he will make inquiries if this act was prompted or encouraged by the boycott and Swadeshi movement in Bengal.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I have no information on the subject beyond what I have seen in the newspapers regarding the lamentable occurrence. I see at present no sufficient ground for making the inquiry suggested.

Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

CAPTAIN WARING (Banffshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that trawlers now trawl for herring, and that this will cause considerable damage to the nets and lines of the coast fishermen, especially in enclosed areas such as the Moray Firth; and whether he proposes to take any action further to protect the line-fishing industry.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I understand that the method of fishing for herring described by my hon. friend has on occasion been adopted. The owners of nets and lines will have claim for compensation in the event of injury. It is not in my power to take action so as to interfere with a method of fishing which is not illegal.

Tralee Railway Goods Rates.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), what are the rates charged by passenger and goods trains for butter, bacon, and eggs from Tralee to London Manchester, and Liverpool; what is the value of each of those commodities imported yearly into England from foreign countries; and what is the value of the imports from Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The rates asked for are as follows—

Rates for Butter, Bacon, and Eggs by Goods Train.

From Tralee to	Butter.		Bacon.			Eggs.			
	Viâ Dublin.	Viâ Cork or Waterford.	Viâ Dublin and Liverpool Screw Steam Packet Company or Tedcastle Company.	Viâ Cork or Waterford.	By other routes.	Viâ Dublin.		Viâ Cork or Waterford.	
	Company's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Owner's risk. Per ton.	Company's risk. Per ton.	Owner's Risk. Per ton.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
Liverpool	33 4	30 0	17 6	15 10 in boxes, viâ Waterford, 12*s.*	25 10	45 0	40 10	40 10	35 10

All the above rates with Liverpool are station to station.

Rates for Butter, Bacon, and Eggs by Goods Train.

From Tralee to	Butter (viâ Dublin, Cork, or Waterford).	Bacon (viâ Dublin, Cork, or Waterford).	Eggs (viâ Dublin, Cork, or Waterford).	
	Carted, per ton. Company's risk.	Carted per ton. Company's risk.	Carted per ton. Company's risk.	Carted per ton. Owner's risk.
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*
Manchester -	40 0	40 0	57 6	50 0
London - -	38 0	36 4	61 4	53 0

Rates for Butter, Bacon, and Eggs by Passenger Train.

From Tralee to	Butter.		Eggs.		Bacon.
	Company's risk. Per cwt.	Owner's risk. Per cwt.	Company's risk. Per cwt.	Owner's risk. Per cwt.	
	s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	
Liverpool -	4 5	3 9	4 5	3 9	Bacon is not usually carried by passenger train, but if a consignment was so forwarded the charge would be at the ordinary parcel's scale of 1*d.* per pound at the company's risk or $\frac{5}{8}$ of a 1*d.* at owner's risk, i.e. say, 9*s.* 4*d.* per cwt. (company's risk), 5*s.* 10*d.* per cwt. (owner's risk).
Manchester	5 5	4 8	5 5	4 9	
London -	7 6	4 8	7 6	5 0	

The above rates are subject to a minimum charge as for 1 cwt. There is no precise information as to the value of the yearly imports of these commodities from foreign countries into England. The estimated values of the imports into Great Britain from foreign countries in 1906 are—

	£
Butter - -	23,195,121
Bacon - -	12,543,791
Eggs - - -	7,060,856

The estimated values of the exports of these commodities from Ireland to Great Britain in 1906 are—

	£
Butter - -	3,585,120
Bacon - - -	1,877,115
Eggs - - -	2,727,410

Ballylongford Untenanted Lands.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. J. D. Crosbie, of Ballyheigue, has offered his untenanted lands situate near Ballylongford, County Kerry, for sale to the Estates Commissioners; whether the lands have been inspected; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Mr. Crosbie has not offered for sale to the Estate Commissioners the untenanted land referred to in the Question.

Irish Export Statistics.

MR. GWYNN (Galway): To ask the Vice President of the Department of

Agriculture (Ireland) if he can state the annual total of Ireland's export trade in cattle, bacon, eggs, poultry, and butter, respectively, for the past three years.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The value of these exports from Ireland in each of the years 1904, 1905, and 1906, are as follows—

	1904.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	£
Cattle - - - - -	9,312,736	8,928,253	9,146,915
Bacon, hams, and pork - -	2,288,121	2,349,039	2,502,870
Eggs - - - - -	2,205,526	2,515,611	2,727,410
Poultry* - - - - -	645,358	696,923	725,441
Butter - - - - -	3,195,015	3,357,666	3,585,120

* The exports of feathers from Ireland for those years has been :—

1904 - - - -	£36,888
1905 - - - -	£53,988
1906 - - - -	£59,064

The figures for 1907 are not yet available.

British Postal Agencies in China.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government of Hong Kong is saddled with the financial as well as the administrative responsibility of carrying on British postal agencies at the principal treaty ports of China; whether the British Government will in future share these expenses and losses, in view of the fact that Great Britain shares the profits from these services; whether the British community at Tientsin have been required to guarantee 7,500 dollars, the estimated loss on the working of the British postal agency at Tientsin during 1908; and whether the 7,500 dollars is treated as revenue in the Hong Kong Government accounts, the Colonial Government being required to pay upon it the 20 per cent. military contribution, notwithstanding that it represents a loss.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Hong Kong Government has for many years carried on the British postal agencies in China, and has hitherto derived from them a profit in which the British Government has not shared. As will be seen from Sub-head D. of the Post Office Estimates, it received a Grant of £810 per annum from the British Government in respect of them, out of which £100 represents an allowance to the Colonial Postmaster-General for increased responsibility. The British Municipal Council at Tientsin have guaranteed a sum of $7,500 to meet the anticipated deficit on the agency of that port during 1908, and under present arrangements any sum so paid would be treated as revenue for the purpose of assessing the Hong Kong military contribution. As I informed the hon. Member for Stretford on 12th March, the question of the maintenance of these agencies is, however, under consideration.

British and Indian Armies.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India what was the effective strength in number of the British and Native Army in India, including officers, during the following years: 1856–7, 1862–3, 1867–8, 1870–1, 1878–9, 1883–4, 1886–7, 1897–8, 1900–1, 1901–2, 1902–3, 1903–4, 1904–5, 1905–6, 1906–7, and 1907–8.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) For the first eight years referred to, the only figures available are those of the established strength of the Army in India. They are as follows—

	British.	Native.
1856	45,104	235,221
1857	45,522	232,224
1862	78,174	125,913
1863	76,085	121,775
1867	65,467	117,681
1868	61,897	119,169
1870	56,954	128,600
1871	58,368	127,520
1878–9	64,726	124,871
1883–4	63,065	126,019
1886–7	73,582	134,492
1897–8	76,376	143,190

These figures do not include the Hyderabad contingent (about 8,600 men). It is believed that for each of these years the actual strength was approximately equal to the established strength. In 1st April in each of the following years the actual strength was as follows—

	British.	Native.
1900–1	63,581	149,358
1901–2	62,999	134,491
1902–3	59,497	143,617
1903–4	74,709	147,876
1904–5	74,872	147,916
1905–6	77,268	149,505
1906–7	75,814	151,725
1907–8	76,019	152,411

These figures include the Hyderabad contingent up to the time of its abolition (about 1902–3), and since that date the units which have taken its place. The actual strength for the earlier of these years was considerably less than the established strength owing to the absence of troops in South Africa, China, and Somaliland.

Navy Engine-Room Department.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state the numbers of officers and men of the Engine-room department borne on 31st March, 1876 and on 31st March, 1908, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The number of officers and men of the engine-room department borne on the 31st March, 1876 was 5,118; the number likely to be borne on 31st instant cannot be stated with precision, but the latest returns available give a total of 35,849.

MR. WEDGWOOD: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the Report of Admiral Sir Cooper Key's Committee, made in 1876, to the effect that, in view of the number of the engine-room staff and the extent of the chief engineers' duties, engineer officers should in future be classed with the military or executive branch of the Navy; and whether, in view of the increase in the numbers of the engine-room staff and engineers' duties since 1876, he proposes to deal with this question of the *status* of engineers during the current Session of Parliament.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson*). My attention has been called to this Report, but I can add nothing at present to the statement which I made in reply to my hon. friend on 10th March.

Irish Travelling Post Offices.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Postmaster-General, whether he has received an application from the staff of the Great Southern and Western travelling post office, Ireland, that the sorting carriages might be heated during the winter months, and also for improved lavatory accommodation; whether he is aware that during the cold weather considerable suffering is experienced, that the heating apparatus runs under and not through the vehicles, and that the necessary alterations of fittings could be easily made; and whether he is prepared to accede to the request of the memoralists.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have received the application referred to. The Post Office has been in communication with the railway company as regards the provision of heating apparatus in these mail carriages, and I have given instructions for a further letter to be sent to them on the subject. I will consider the application for washing accommodation.

London Postal Sorters.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Postmaster-General if it is with his knowledge that members of the sorting staff in the London postal service, who cannot possibly benefit from the new scales of pay resulting from the Hobhouse Report, are being supplied with forms requesting them to sign in favour of being placed on the new scales or remaining under the old scales; if so, what is the object of seeking such information; and, seeing this action is calculated to create much misunderstanding he will give instructions for the withdrawal of the forms.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have received a communication from the Fawcett Association, representing the London sorting staff, on this subject, which I have answered.

Seaham Harbour Postal Facilities.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware of the inconvenience caused to the inhabitants and shipping trade of Seaham Harbour by the refusal of the Post Office to provide facilities for despatch of letters from that town after 8.15 p.m.; and whether he can arrange that one pillar-box in a central position shall be cleared as late as possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Under existing arrangements letters may be posted in the letter box at the Seaham Colliery station up to 10.25 p.m. for despatch to Sunderland the same night. I regret that the cost of providing further facilities would not be justified.

Sanitation at the Seaside.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in the case of the sanitary authorities of popular seaside and health resorts who have applied for orders under the Public Health Act, 1907, he will issue such orders without delay, in order that the sanitary authorities in question may secure the advantages of the Act before the summer season commences.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am desirous that the several cases should be dealt with as early as practicable, and I will bear in mind the point to which the hon. Member refers; but the preliminary investigations necessary in each individual case, as well as the statutory requirements which have to be complied with, make it impossible to issue the orders with great rapidity.

Imports of Peat-Moss Litter.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has considered the desirability of prohibiting the importation of peat-moss litter from Holland; and whether, if fine moss is used for feeding purposes, as the basis of molassine meal, this material also has been the subject of consideration.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board have very fully considered the advisability of prohibiting the importation of both the articles to which my hon. friend refers, and they are satisfied that there is no necessity for doing so.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), if he is aware that the weekly imports of peat-moss litter into Belfast from the Continent amount to seventy-five tons; if he has any official information showing that large shipments are at present on the way to this country; and whether, considering the prevalence of cattle disease on the Continent, he will take steps to prohibit such importation.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The Department have no information regarding the pending shipments referred to in this Question, but they are aware that there is a considerable import trade in foreign peat-moss litter into Belfast. The question of such imports has recently been carefully considered, and, as at present advised, the Department do not see that adequate grounds exist for subjecting the importation of litter made from peat-moss (the preparation of which takes place under conditions which appear to be very different from those applicable to hay and straw) to any restrictions under the Diseases of Animals Acts.

Burnfoot Prosecution for Cruelty to Cattle.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture

(Ireland), if his attention has been called to several cases tried on the 20th instant at Burnfoot petty sessions on the charge of cruelty to cattle; if he is aware that a number of cattle were shipped by steamer for Fahan, and, in order to get them landed, a gangway was made up with planks and the animals forced over into the sea, and some of them had to be dragged ashore by means of a rope and landed in an exhausted condition; and if he will make inquiry into the matter in order that arrangements may be made that the unshipping of cattle in this place may be carried out in a humane manner.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The Department have seen a newspaper report respecting these cases. The place where they occurred appears, owing to the movement of sand, to have become unsuitable for disembarking cattle in certain conditions of the tide. The Department are arranging to have the circumstances fully looked into.

Great Southern and Western Railway Dispute.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, has the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland yet signified their agreement to the terms of the late railway dispute; and, if so, when and how will their conciliation board be formed, and will representation on the same board be provided for employees on behalf of railway officers' associations such as stationmasters and clerks.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The Great Southern and Western Railway Company have expressed their willingness to adopt a scheme for conciliation boards on the lines of that agreed to for British railways generally, and the Board of Trade are awaiting the proposals of the company as to the details to be arranged for their line.

Harrow Schools.

MR. GIBB (Middlesex, Harrow): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that an experimental school system has been imposed by the education committee of the Middlesex County Council upon the Harrow elementary school district against the advice of the Harrow school managers, and against the desire of the parents and ratepayers of the said district, as expressed at a public meeting and embodied in a petition to the Middlesex education committee; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I have been informed by the local education authority that they propose to take the opportunity of the opening of the new council school at Vaughan Road, Harrow, to rearrange the schools in the district, and to restrict the Greenhill boys' and girls' departments to Standards V. and upwards, keeping the Wealdstone Bridge School and the Vaughan Road School as lower standard schools. The object appears to be to grade the schools with a view to bringing the older and more advanced scholars into one school in which arrangements could be made for their more efficient instruction. The reorganisation is within the competence of the authority, and has been approved by the Board subject to its reconsideration should the experiment prove unsuccessful.

Income-Tax.

MR. W. T. WILSON: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that, although he has intimated to surveyors of taxes that in all cases where the omission of bonuses from income-tax Returns have been made under the *bona fide* belief that they were exempt, and that no demand was to be made for back tax, and if any had been received it must be returned, some surveyors of taxes are demanding the back tax and compelling its payment; and whether he will, under the circumstances, again communicate with the Inland Revenue authorities with the object of securing equitable treatment to all those who were *bona fide* of the opinion that a bonus on wages was exempt from the tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The instruction given to the surveyors of taxes in this matter have, so far as the Board of Inland Revenue are aware, been strictly adhered to. But, if the hon. Member has any particular case in mind and will furnish me with details, inquiry shall be made.

Kilbrin Evicted Tenant.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have yet taken any steps towards securing the reinstatement of Timothy O'Donovan, who was evicted from his holding on the Barry estate, Ballyvoe, Kilbrin, County Cork; are the Commissioners aware that this holding was visited in May, 1907, by Mr. Inspector Byrne; and whether, as the holding is now in the landlord's hands, the Commissioners will avail themselves of their powers under the Act of 1907 to procure the restoration of this tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners had the former holding of Timothy O'Donovan inspected in May last, and have decided that the evicted tenant's widow is a suitable person to work a farm. The Commissioners will in due course consider whether the case is one for the application of their powers under the Evicted Tenants Act.

Funerals of Indian and Crimean Veterans.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Roland Crocker, trooper of the 11th Hussars, who died a short time ago in Kensington Workhouse Infirmary, and was proved by papers found in his possession to have been one of the Six Hundred at Balaclava, was buried with full military honours, a party of men from his old regiment attending; and, if so, will the same concession apply to the Indian and Crimean veterans who reside in Belfast and neighbourhood.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The pensioner named in the Question was not buried with military honours, but the loan of a gun-carriage which was in the custody of the Army Service Corps at Kensington Barracks was sanctioned for his funeral. A few men of the 11th Hussars who were on furlough in London and a few men of the Army Service Corps voluntarily attended the funeral. Neither officers nor men who are not on the active list are entitled to a military funeral, but, as in the above case, there is no objection to a semi-military funeral being arranged privately, provided that no expense to the public is incurred.

Sub-Target Rifle Machine Trials.

Sir CLEMENT HILL (Shrewsbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War what has been the result of the Army trials of the sub-target rifle machine which were begun in 1906; and whether any such machine is now being officially used.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There have been no official trials of this machine. In 1906 Reports were called for as to experience gained with some privately owned machines and these were favourable. It has now, however, been arranged to give a trial to a new and far cheaper design which is being manufactured. Only eight machines were purchased out of public funds.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Destruction of Cordite.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, in reference to the refusal of the Board to state the amount and value of the large quantity of cordite which has been destroyed because of the presence of mercuric chloride, whether the Board have furnished, or propose to furnish, the Auditor-General with the information; and whether the reserves of ammunition were at once brought up to compensate for these unexpected losses.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): No cordite has been destroyed because it contained mercuric chloride.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Was it then because it had deteriorated?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: Yes, on account of age.

Stock of Cordite.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the cordite which has been destroyed since 1st January 1907, either because of deterioration or because of the presence of mercuric chloride, has been replaced; and whether the present stock of cordite is as large as it was on 1st January, 1907.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: It is not desirable in the public interest to give any detailed information as to the stock of cordite, but it is at least as large as on the 1st January, 1907.

Norwegian Granite for Haulbowline Works.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state from whence the granite for use in the new works at Haulbowline is being obtained; and whether any of the granite to be used is foreign granite.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The contractors have informed the Admiralty that they are obtaining the granite from Norwegian quarries.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the very finest granite is to be obtained in Great Britain, and that, if the Government had secured the granite in Great Britain, the wages would have been spent on working people in our own country?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I believe very good granite is to be obtained in this country.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the contractor is a strong tariff reformer?

Mr. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): What was the difference in price between the Norwegian and the British contracts?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: There were alternative contracts for Irish limestone and granite. The difference was about 20 per cent. in the favour of the granite.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: Can the right hon. Gentleman give the difference in price between the granite to be obtained in this country and foreign granite?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked for notice of the Question.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the best limestone in Ireland is procurable in the immediate vicinity of Haulbowline?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I believe so.

Mr. REMNANT: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us the difference in the wages paid the Norwegian worker?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: No, Sir, I cannot.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): You ought to know.

Consumptive Soldiers.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what steps (if any) are or will be taken to carry out the recommendations of the special War Office Committee with regard to soldiers suffering from tuberculosis and making provision for their reception into suitable sanatoria, and thus prevent the spread amongst the civilian population in their own homes of a disease which is killing off some 40,000 of our population annually.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): Will the hon. and gallant Member kindly refer to my replies to previous Questions on this subject put by the hon. Member for Sunderland on the 18th February, and the hon. Member for the Abercromby division of Liverpool on the 2nd instant, to which at present I have nothing to add.

New Forest Manœuvres.

Sir ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is proposed to authorise by Order in Council large military manœuvres in the New Forest during the coming autumn; whether his attention has been drawn to the provisions of The Military Manœuvres Act, 1897, especially to Section 1 (2) which requires six months' notice to the county district and parish councils, wholly or partly within the specified limits, and in the case of the New Forest to the Court of Verderers, with three months notice, to be advertised in two local newspapers before the Order comes into force, together with an address from each House of Parliament to His Majesty, praying that the Order may be made; and further to inquire whether the term authorised forces in the Military Manœuvres Act applies to the Territorial Forces equally with the Regular Forces of the Crown.

MR. HALDANE: It is not proposed to make use of the Military Manœuvres Act in the New Forest in 1908. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Southern Command has arranged in a friendly fashion with the Office of Woods and Forests for permission to hold manœuvres in and about the New Forest in the autumn, a plan which is much preferable to the costly and clumsy one of resorting to compulsory powers. As regards the last part of the Question the phrase "authorised forces" applies to the Territorial Forces as well as the Regular Forces.

SIR ROBERT HOBART asked whether permission had been obtained from the Court of Verderers.

MR. HALDANE asked that the Question should be put down.

MR. ASHLEY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had ascertained whether the manœuvres were viewed with favour by those who had common or grazing rights.

MR. HALDANE said he assumed so, otherwise permission would not be given.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Is it not the fact that the hon. Member for the New Forest is the chief holder of these rights?

[No Answer was returned.]

Cordite and Mercuric Chloride.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Report of Lord Rayleigh's Committee bore out the conclusion of his expert advisers, as stated by him in the debate on 11th June, 1907, that there was no excuse for using mercuric chloride as an antiseptic in cordite, and that the only purpose for which mercuric chloride could be added to cordite was to mask the heat test.

MR. HALDANE: As I have already explained to the House, the investigation of the question of the use of mercury in the manufacture of cordite was not referred to the Conference under the presidency of Lord Rayleigh.

MR. BELLAIRS asked whether his right hon. friend was aware that the Secretary of State for the Home Department had just said that the Committee unanimously recommended that the blasting explosive which contained mercuric chloride should be destroyed; and was there any inherent difference between cordite and blasting explosives in the matter.

MR. HALDANE: We decided this question for ourselves; we had our own specifications.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): Has all the cordite containing mercuric chloride held by the War Office been destroyed?

MR. HALDANE: I imagine so.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) asked why it was that the cordite belonging to the War Office which contained mercuric chloride had been destroyed on that ground, while cordite belonging to the Admiralty which contained mercuric chloride had not been destroyed on that ground.

MR. HALDANE said that the War Office had it in their specifications that mercuric chloride and such things were not to be put in, and where they were put in they rejected the cordite. The Question should be put down.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is it not the fact that many experts hold that mercuric chloride adds to rather than detracts from the stability of chloride?

MR. HALDANE: I am not aware of that.

MR. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): What was the value of the cordite destroyed by the War Office?

MR. HALDANE asked for notice.

Fife Garrison Artillery Militia.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether reductions are to be made in the permanent staff of the Fife Royal Garrison Artillery Militia when it is formed into Field Artillery Special Reserve; what course will be taken with those members of the permanent staff who will lose their present appointments; and whether, considering the fact that they are mostly married men, warning may be given them before April to enable them to give notice to give up their houses.

MR. HALDANE: Some reductions will have to be made in the permanent staff, but they will not take place until after the annual training. Every endeavour will be made to avoid hardships as far as possible by giving sufficient warning. Those who are reduced will be absorbed in Royal Garrison Artillery units of the Territorial Force, or in Royal Garrison Artillery.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): By what proportion will the permanent staff be reduced?

MR. HALDANE: I cannot say at present.

Army Quartermasters and Riding Masters.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in consideration of the long service and good conduct entailed by those who have risen from the ranks to the position of quartermaster and riding-master in His Majesty's Army, he will consider the advisability of amending the regulations to ensure them substantive rank instead of honorary rank, quicker promotion from the rank of lieutenant, and a higher rate of retired pay.

MR. HALDANE: It is not considered that the duties of a quartermaster necessitates the grant of substantive rank, as his appointment as such is held to give him all the authority he requires, and his work during his whole period of service as such is practically the same. As regards promotion the steps of honorary rank may be regarded as corresponding to the average rate of promotion in the case of officers holding substantive rank. As regards retired pay, as I fully explained in my reply to a Question put by the hon. Member for the Newmarket Division of Cambridgeshire on the 19th February, it has not been thought right to make any increase.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I cannot agree that the average rate of promotion corresponds in the two cases. It is very different.

Army Pensions.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of making it obligatory for boards of guardians to distribute pensions to old soldiers instead of optional, as at present proposed.

MR. HALDANE: The War Office has no power to make it obligatory for boards of guardians to distribute soldiers pensions. In exceptional cases where pensioners frequently become inmates of workhouses, payment is made weekly by the guardians, but any attempt to make this custom of general application would be strongly resented by the pensioners. I do not, therefore, propose to adopt the hon. and gallant Member's suggestion.

Yeomanry and the Territorial Army.

SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it will be obligatory on all the Yeomanry when joining the Territorial Army to engage for a term of four years; and whether he will issue an Order to enable those yeomen who have already served in the force, whose engagement expires after 1st April and who desire to join the Territorial Army, to engage for one year instead of four years.

MR. HALDANE: As I have previously explained to the House, yeomen, if enrolled before the 18th August, 1901, who have not since come under the Militia and Yeomanry Act, 1901, may either serve for one year from the 31st March, 1908, or sign for the full period of four years. Those serving under the Act of 1901 may elect either to serve for the term required to complete their present period of engagement, re-engagement or re-enlistment, or to sign for the full period of four years.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) asked if a man enlisted under the Act of 1901 had already served three years he would have to bind himself to serve in the Territorial Army for another four years?

MR. HALDANE asked for notice.

Cakijanu, the Zulu.

MR. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the Zulu, Cakijana, for whose apprehension £100 reward was offered, and who is alleged to be the most important of the witnesses wanted against Dinizulu, surrendered voluntarily to the Commissioner of Police of Natal upon the advice of Miss Colenso; whether he protested his own innocence and that of Dinizulu, and begged the protection of the Governor against the application of martial law in his case; whether, notwithstanding this, he was sent back to Nkandhla, where martial law is in force; whether he has been, or is to be, tried under martial law; and whether any, and, if so, what punishment has been inflicted upon him?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I have no official information on the subject of the Question, but I would remind the hon. Member that the Natal Government has repudiated the suggestion that they had, at any time, the intention of trying Dinizulu himself by court-martial, and I cannot think that they would contemplate such a proceeding in the case of Cakijana.

Colonial Crown Agents' Office Administration.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State has yet appointed a Committee to inquire into and report upon the constitution, administration, and internal management of the office of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, as promised; and, if so, whether he has any objection to give the names of the members of the Committee and the terms of reference.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir; but the Secretary of State has made considerable progress in that direction, and I hope that before long it may be possible to make a statement.

St. Helena.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the fact that the inhabitants of St. Helena, numbering about 5,000, have only one medical man to attend to their needs, he will consider the advisability of appointing an assistant Colonial surgeon.

MR. CHURCHILL: The number of inhabitants of St. Helena at the last census in May, 1901, was 3,342, not 5,000, and there is reason to believe that the number has been reduced since that date. The question of appointing an assistant Colonial surgeon has been considered on several occasions, but it has not been found advisable to do so. There is an official hospital, with a staff of trained nurses, to supplement the services of the Colonial surgeon.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the doctor now in charge has met with an accident and that the people are consequently doctorless?

MR. CHURCHILL: I have not heard that.

Deportation of Sick Chinese from the Transvaal.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can say how many Chinese labourers have been deported to China, under Section 26 of the Transvaal Ordinance, 1904, on account of disease and physical infirmity; and how far the effect of this section has been taken into account in arriving at the comparative rates of mortality of the Chinese and Kaffirs working in the gold mines.

*MR. CHURCHILL: I understand that the total number of Chinese repatriated up to date as physically unfit is 4,783. The figures of mortality show only deaths on the Rand, and deaths either of Chinese or Kaffirs, who have left the Rand are not included.

MR. MACKARNESS: Are Kaffirs deported in the same way?

*MR. CHURCHILL: There is no law providing for it as in the case of the Chinese.

Repatriation of Chinese.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state the number of Chinese labourers repatriated from the Transvaal mines in the month of February, and the number of Kaffirs waiting to take their places; and whether he is aware of any complaints having been made by the mine owners of the inadequacy of the supply of native labour?

MR. CHURCHILL: 3,037 Chinese were repatriated in February, and the net gain of natives during the month was 7,641. The native recruiting returns have latterly made a record, and I am not aware that complaints of the inadequacy of the supply are at present being made.

The Algeciras Convention.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government has been approached by any foreign Power with a view to the denunciation or modification of the Algeciras Convention.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The answer is in the negative.

Mecca Pilgrims.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps have been taken by the Egyptian Government to secure the safe return to the coast of the large body of Egyptian subjects who have undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The measures taken by the Egyptian Government for the protection of Egyptian pilgrims to Mecca were revised in 1906. The honourable Member will find details on the subject in Lord Cromer's last two published Annual Reports (Egypt No. 1 [1906] page 66, and Egypt No. 1 [1907] page 78). His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople has reported that, in consequence of a recent attack on the caravan by Arabs, the Grand Vizier has instructed the Vali of the Hedjaz and Kiazim Pasha, who is in charge of the Hedjaz Railway Works, to take the necessary steps to ensure the safe return of the pilgrims.

Panama Labour.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the Report upon Panama Labour will be in the hands of Members.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Report will be in the hands of Members in a few days.

Cotton Cultivation in Egypt.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a Commission has been appointed by the Egyptian Government to examine the question of the recent and present state of cotton cultivation in Egypt; whether the members appointed are respectively the English directors of the Survey Department and the Ministry of Finance, and the English secretary of the Khedivial Society of Agriculture; and whether it is intended to appoint on the Commission any native landholders engaged in cotton cultivation and any scientific experts.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have received no official information on the subject, but I will make inquiry.

Cordite Dispute with Messrs. Kynoch.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the fact that much correspondence ensued with Messrs. Kynoch subsequent to the announcement of the terms of the settlement on 26th June, 1907, whether he will state in what way the settlement was modified through the correspondence; and whether the correspondence and the final terms of the settlement can be published.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The terms of settlement were not modified in any respect, and remain the same as I stated in the House on the 3rd of last July. The correspondence which has passed between Messrs. Kynoch and the Home Department related to the carrying out of the terms of the settlement, particularly to the question which of the blasting explosives under seizure contained mercuric chloride, and to the release from seizure of those explosives which did not contain that ingredient; also to the reassembly of the conference under the chairmanship of Lord Rayleigh. That conference re-assembled on the 25th of last month, and unanimously recommended that the blasting explosive containing mercuric chloride should be destroyed. In these circumstances, no useful purpose would be served by publishing the correspondence.

Privileged Cabs at London Railway Stations.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many railway stations within the metropolitan area have remained closed to cab drivers under the provisions of the London Cab and Stage Carriage Act, 1907.

MR. GLADSTONE: Orders made under Section 2 of the London Cab and Stage Carriage Act, 1907, have exempted from the operation of that section all stations except the terminal stations of the various railway companies, and the London and South Western stations at Vauxhall and Clapham Junction. This is in accordance with the clear understanding arrived at when the Bill was before Parliament that suburban stations would not as a rule be dealt with under the section.

The "All Red" Route.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the Committee appointed to consider the All Red Route reported to the Government; and if he will lay the Report or such portion of it as may be published without prejudice to the public interest.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): No report has yet been made by the informal Committee referred to. The Committee have not as yet received any formal proposals from the Dominions interested.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Can the hon. Gentleman say when the Committee is likely to report?

MR. KEARLEY: No, Sir.

Automatic Couplings.

MR. MADDISON (Burnley): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Railway Employment Safety Appliance Committee has had any trials of automatic couplings or made any report on them, and, if it has expressed any view throwing doubt on their value as safety-appliances, on what evidence it is based.

MR. KEARLEY: The Committee which consists of Colonel Yorke, my hon. friend the Member for Derby, and Mr. Turnbull of the London and North Western Railway were asked to consider whether it was advisable that investigations and experiments should be undertaken in regard to automatic couplings, and they reported after very full consideration that it appeared to be impracticable to fit such appliances to existing waggon stock and that consequently any extensive tests of automatic couplers under present conditions would be of no value. The Committee's Report will be presented when they have concluded their investigations.

MR. MADDISON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has refused to appoint a juror on the Italian Committee which is to conduct trials of automatic couplers; and, if so, whether he will reconsider his decision, seeing that the use of automatic couplings in the United States has shown that they have been the means of considerable saving of life and limb.

MR. KEARLEY: His Majesty's Government have received no invitation to nominate a juror on this Committee.

Scarlet Fever in London.

MR. REMNANT: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what action he proposes to take relative to the resolution unanimously passed by the managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District on the 7th December, 1907, and supported by the Corporation of the City of London and generally by the borough councils and boards of guardians of the metropolis, asking the Local Government Board, in view of the continued prevalence of scarlet fever, notwithstanding the extensive isolation accommodation which has been provided, to cause an inquiry to be instituted into the cause of the disease; and whether any, and, if so, what, further means can be adopted for its prevention

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (DR. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): My right hon. friend has received the resolution referred to, which has been supported by various borough councils and boards of guardians. He is giving consideration to the subject, but has not yet arrived at a decision with regard to it.

MR. REMNANT: When is a decision likely to be arrived at?

*DR. MACNAMARA: I will put the Question to my right hon. friend.

Danish Bacon and Lard.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, as a result of the fining of Alexander Polsen, manager of the Albion Bacon Curing Factory at Holbeck, Denmark, for melting lard derived from diseased animals, his attention has been called to the action of the Danish Minister of Agriculture in concealing the fact that one of the directors had been fined for practices which might injure the reputation of Danish produce on the English market; and whether, in view of the fact that the managers of all the Danish co-operative slaughter-houses met at Copenhagen on 23rd March condemned the management of the Albion factory and expressed a wish to secure more effective control over bacon and other meat exported from Denmark, he will state what steps he proposes to take to safeguard the interests of consumers in this country pending the introduction of more effective control by legislation in Denmark.

DR. MACNAMARA: My right hon. friend has seen the statements in *The Times* with regard to the matters referred to in the Question. He does not think any special action is necessary at the present time as regards the importation of bacon and meat from Denmark, but he has in preparation regulations dealing generally with the measures to be taken for the prevention of danger to health from the importation of foreign meat.

MR. BOLAND: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a Bill has been introduced into the Danish legislature to deal with this matter, thereby admitting that the present control is ineffective?

DR. MACNAMARA: I am not aware of that.

Postage to Morocco.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that Great Britain possesses some 50 per cent. of the trade, he will consider the advisability of reducing the postage between Morocco and this country to 1d. per ounce, as is the case in respect of letters posted between Morocco, Spain, Germany, and France.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The question of reducing the rate of postage upon letters passing between the British postal agencies in Morocco and this country is now under my consideration.

Newfoundland Newspaper Rates.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will consider the advisability of reducing the rate of postage on newspapers and periodicals sent from the United Kingdom to Newfoundland to 1d. per pound, thus establishing the same rate as applies in the case of newspapers and periodicals sent from this country to Canada.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The reduction of postage on magazines and periodicals to Canada was based on the very special and peculiar position occupied by that Dominion, as the result of which British periodicals were unable to obtain a footing in Canada, their places being taken by publications from the United States. These conditions, as far as I am aware, do not prevail in Newfoundland. The rate on newspapers from the United States to Newfoundland is, according to the latest information available, the usual Postal Union rate, identically the same as the rate from Great Britain to Newfoundland. There does not appear, therefore, any reason for extending the Canadian Magazine Post to Newfoundland.

Castle Morton Schoolroom.

MR. ESSEX (Gloucestershire, Cirencester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to a Primrose League concert and smoking political meeting held about a fortnight ago in the schoolroom of Castle Morton, Worcestershire, the vicar of the parish in the chair; whether he is aware that an off-license permitted the sale of refreshments on the school premises to many lads and other persons who were present; and whether he is taking or has taken any action in the matter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthsire, N.): Yes, Sir. This school is a church school, the trustees of which are the Bishop and Archdeacon of Worcester and the Vicar of Longdon. I am not at present aware of the precise provisions of the trust or of the degree of responsibility of the trustees, but I have very little doubt that the use of the premises for the purposes mentioned, accompanied by the sale of intoxicating liquor, is not permissible under the terms of the deed.

MR. ESSEX: Has the right hon. Gentleman satisfied himself that the permission was legally given?

MR. MCKENNA: I had nothing to do with the legality of the permission. The point of the Question is as to the permissible nature of this use of a trust building. I do not think it was permissible.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Has the right hon. Gentleman inquired if the facts are as alleged?

MR. MCKENNA: I have been informed they are.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: By whom?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Imperial College of Science.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he has received any representation from the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions regarding the composition of the governing body of the Imperial College of Science and Technology indicating that in the opinion of these teachers the present constitution of the governing body of this college separated its work from existing technical institutions, and whether he proposes to settle immediately if the college is to be an independent foundation or part of the London University.

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, Sir. I received representations to that effect on the 4th February last. I have pointed out to the association that thirty out of the thirty-nine members of the governing body are nominated either by technical societies or by other bodies specially interested in technical education. With regard to the last paragraph, I must refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave him on the 2nd inst.

Medical Inspection of Irish School Children.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether it is intended that the special grant for medical inspection and other purposes which he has stated he is prepared to recommend the Treasury to extend to elementary schools in England and Wales will be available for provided as well as non-provided schools; and whether the grant to provided schools would be affected by the passage of the Education Bill into law.

MR. MCKENNA: The statement which the hon. Member quotes was inaccurately reported. I informed a deputation that I could not undertake to recommend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make a special grant for medical inspection or to approach him with a view to obtaining any increase of grant for the ensuing year.

Teachers' Registration Council.

MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the staff of the Teachers' Registration Council will be taken over by the new council when it is appointed; and, if not, whether any, and, if so, what, employment can be found for the members of the staff.

MR. MCKENNA: It will rest with the new council to decide what officers they will employ. The question of finding some temporary employment in connection with the Board of Education is now under consideration.

MR. A. ALLEN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Teachers' Registration Council has been dissolved; and, if so, when the new council is to be appointed.

MR. MCKENNA: The existing council will be dissolved under the Order in Council on the 31st inst. With regard to the last paragraph, I must refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave yesterday to the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford University.

Marble Arch Improvement.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works what sum is allotted in Class 1 of the Estimates, 1908–9, for the alterations now being carried out at Marble Arch.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): No definite sum is allotted for this service in the Estimate for 1908–9. The cost will be met partly out of money available on the current year's Vote, and partly on the Vote for 1908–9, under Subhead F. Maintenance.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say to what sum the cost will amount?

MR. HARCOURT: I cannot say. I am working with the London County Council, and I cannot say how the cost will be divided between us.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman determine it or the County Council?

MR. HARCOURT: It will be easily determined by the line taken by the new fences of the park—on our side it will be our expense; on the other the County Council's.

Imports of Foreign Straw.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can see his way to include foreign straw used for packing and foreign peat-moss in the Order prohibiting import, having regard to the fact that both these articles are used for litter, and that peat-moss is imported from places where there is foot-and-mouth disease.

*MR. J. A. PEASE (for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): The Board do not see their way to adopt the suggestion of my hon. friend. They are satisfied that it would not be practicable to prohibit the introduction of straw used in packing, and in the case of peat-moss litter the manner in which that article is prepared for use renders it extremely improbable, if not impossible, that foot-and-mouth disease can be introduced thereby.

MR. COURTHOPE: Will the Government consider the possibility of preventing the sale of this packing straw.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: We have considered that fully and have come to the conclusion that it would be absolutely impossible to watch the course of this packing straw in all cases, and to have it destroyed.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Is not its importation prohibited in Ireland?

*MR. J. A. PEASE: Not to my knowledge.

Tobacco Growing in Scotland.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, under what statute has the Treasury authority to issue permits for the growth of tobacco in Scotland; how much land might any individual cultivate with tobacco under such a permit; would the permit authorise the selling of the produce; and what amount of Excise Duty would be chargeable.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): In the form which the hon. Member has given to this Question I can only make him the same reply as on Monday last. I understand, however, that he intends to refer to the permission which had been given by successive Governments for several years previously to the passing of the Irish Tobacco Act, 1907, to grow tobacco for experimental purposes in Ireland. For these purposes the area under cultivation was limited to 109 acres and as a matter of fact no individual cultivated more than twenty acres. In these circumstances it was unnecessary to prohibit the sale of the produce. No Excise Duty was charged, but the growers agreed to make a payment equal to the Customs Duty on the amount of tobacco grown with a promise of refund of one third subsequently. His Majesty's Government are prepared to allow similar facilities for experimentation in Scotland under similar conditions.

MR. COCHRANE: The point is under what statute the sanction is given?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I believe the action taken by our predecessors was executive action.

Mail Service Contracts.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, when it is proposed to discuss the mail service contracts.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I am unable to say at present.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will the Government give ample opportunity for the discussion?

MR. RUNCIMAN: That Question should be addressed to the Leader of the House.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will the hon. Gentleman make representations in the proper quarter to secure that we have ample opportunity?

[No Answer was returned.]

Unlicensed Money Lending.

MR. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General, whether his attention has been called to the evidence given at the inquest on the body of a woman who committed suicide at 52, Gainsford Street, S.E., on 11th January, and especially to the evidence of a woman moneylender from whom the deceased had borrowed money, and who confessed to being unlicensed although engaged in lending money about the district; whether this case was brought to the notice of the Public Prosecutor; and, if so, on what grounds he refused to take action.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields): The Public Prosecutor has inquired into this case, but there is no evidence in existence or apparently obtainable which would justify him in charging the woman as a moneylender within the meaning of the Act.

Foriegn Trawlers in the North Sea.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the decision in the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh, some time since, will he state why foreign trawlers detected trawling in the Moray Firth are no longer prosecuted.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): At the same time may I ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that to carry out the decision of the High Court of Justiciary, Scotland, and prosecute all foreign trawlers fishing outside the three mile limits in the Moray Firth would constitute a breach of International Law; whether he has been informed that that is the opinion of the Foreign Office; and whether he will immediately take steps to withdraw the British cruisers which at present protect these fishing grounds for the exclusive use and advantage of foreigners, and remove restrictions which prevent British fishermen from trawling in these waters.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government propose to take any steps to compel the trawlers which are engaged in illegal trawling around the coasts of Scotland to obey the law; and whether he is aware that the rich companies and trusts are allowed to carry on this illegal trawling with impunity and thus deprive the fishermen of their means of livelihood.

SIR ARTHUR BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether trawling vessels of foreign countries fishing within the limits of the Moray Firth, but more than three miles from low-water mark therein, are immune from prosecution, or whether the law as laid down by the Justiciary Appeal Court of Scotland in July 1906 is now enforceable.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The Government, for reasons of International comity, are not prepared to instruct proceedings against foreign trawlers engaged in trawling outside the limit of territorial waters recognised by international convention. I am, however, in communication with the other Government Departments concerned, with a view to the formulation of proposals for submission to other Powers at the earliest possible date.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY asked whether there were not a thousand miles in the Moray Firth outside the three miles limit, which were not under the control of the Department, but which the Government were policing with British ships at the expense of the taxpayers; and whether the right hon. Gentleman would take steps to remove these restrictions and give British fishermen the same opportunities as foreign fishermen enjoyed.

MR. SINCLAIR: It is the duty of British subjects to obey the law.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: Does the right hon. Gentleman imply that British fishermen do not obey the law?

MR. WEIR: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that—

MR. STANLEY WILSON: He will not answer it.

MR. WEIR: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the first consideration to the needs of line fishermen as against the trawlers?

MR. STANLEY WILSON: Are we to understand that the right hon. Gentleman is in favour of giving preferential treatment to foreigners?

[No Answer was given.]

MR. WEIR again asked whether the first consideration would be given to the line fishermen rather than to the trawlers.

MR. COURTHOPE asked whether the Government would consider the advisability of a change in the law.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Government will, of course, bear such considerations in mind, and in reply to the hon. Member for Ross-shire, I can assure him that the consideration he mentions is present to the mind of the Government.

MR. ASHLEY: Are we to understand that the Government recognise the right of trawlers flying a foreign flag to fish outside the three-mile limit without let or hindrance?

MR. SINCLAIR: That is fully covered by the Answer to the Question on the Paper.

MR. WATT: Is it the case as alleged that the opinion of the Lord Chancellor is enabling the Government to over-ride the unanimous opinion of the Court of Session?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better put that Question down.

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, in view of the fact that the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill has been rejected by the Lords, will he state what steps the Government propose to take to meet the land hunger and distress in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: The responsibility for the rejection of this Bill does not lie with the Government. They are very sensible of the vital importance of the subject, an importance which has in no degree decreased, but I have no statement to make at present.

MR. WEIR: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that there is acute distress in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and that the Bill which was brought in was an impossible Bill to pass? Is the right hon. Gentleman also not aware that the conditions in the Highlands are totally different from those in the Lowlands?

MR. SINCLAIR: I am aware of the fact, but I am not able to follow my hon. friend into a discussion of that nature.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Government intend to support in this House another Bill dealing with that subject which has been introduced by a noble Lord in the House of Lords?

MR. SINCLAIR: That question will arise when the circumstance occurs to which the noble Lord refers.

MR. AINSWORTH: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of increasing the powers of the Congested Districts Board of Scotland by legislation so as to enable them to deal with the question of small holdings by hiring or purchasing land for the whole of Scotland?

MR. SINCLAIR asked for notice of that Question.

Scottish Congestion and Migration.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Congested Districts Board have yet framed a scheme for the encouragement of migration to the mainland; and, if not will he explain the cause of the delay.

MR. SINCLAIR: Until the information referred to in my Answer to my hon. friend's Question on the 11th instant has been received I am unable to make any further statement.

Campbeltown Sheriff's Judgment on Trawling.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, in a case of illegal trawling tried at Campbeltown, Argyllshire, on the 4th of September, 1907, the sheriff said that, from a tolerable experience of convictions of those who have been guilty of transgressing the law as to otter trawling, he thought that until Parliament saw fit to permit the imposition of some much more drastic punishment than the limit which at present the Courts have power to inflict, and the provision of more adequate means for the detection and capture of offenders, such as more and faster cruisers, little can be done effectively to prevent illegal trawling and the ultimate ruin of the entire fishing industry, that the punishment which at present it is in the power of the Courts to inflict was wholly inadequate to prevent the infraction of the law, and that the number and the speed of the protective vessels at present at the disposal of the Fishery Board was wholly incommensurate with the necessities of the case; and whether, under those circumstances, he will take steps to vindicate the law and to compel these illegal trawlers to obey the law.

MR. SINCLAIR: Regarding the earlier part of this Question I can only refer my hon. friend to the reply given him on the 24th instant. The protective vessels are rendering efficient service in the vindication of the law, and it is owing to financial considerations that the number has not been further increased.

Scottish Herring Fishery.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether in view of the failure of the herring fishery on the West Coast of Shetland since the killing of whales commenced and operations consequent, and the apprehension that still wider-spread disaster will ensue, he will take precautions to protect the inshore fisheries from the depredations of trawlers.

MR. SINCLAIR: The fishery cruisers have instructions to secure the purpose indicated by my hon. friend.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Will the right hon. Gentleman take some steps to secure that persons caught destroying the fishery shall be punished?

MR. SINCLAIR: I do not quite understand the bearing of that Question. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put it down.

Convictions for Illegal Trawling.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the efforts of the Orkney and Shetland Vigilance Association to secure conviction of trawlers engaged in destroying the inshore fisheries have been attended with some measure of success; and if the Government would consider whether the offering of a reward for the conviction of offenders would have a salutary effect.

MR. SINCLAIR: I accept the information given in the earlier part of the Question from my hon. friend. The offer of a reward by the Government for the conviction of offenders is not a course of action which I can see my way to adopt.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: Then are we to understand the Scottish Department admits that there are spies all round the coasts of Scotland?

MR. SINCLAIR: No, Sir.

Grimsby Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

MR. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that most of the so-called foreign trawlers in the Moray Firth are owned in Grimsby, and are placed under the Norwegian flag in order to evade the laws of this Country, and thus unfairly to fish in waters prohibited to their fellow countrymen; and, seeing that the International Fisheries Conference at Christiana in 1901, at which the representatives of Norway were present, unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that in distinct areas of the sea, as for example the Moray Firth, in which any Government have undertaken scientific experiments in the interests of the fisheries, and in which the success of the experiments is being hindered by the operations of trawlers, it is to be desired that measures be adopted for the removal of such hindrances, whether the Government will make a friendly representation to the Norwegian Government with regard to adoption of measures for the removal of the hindrances above referred to?

MR. SINCLAIR: I understand the facts to be as stated in the first part of my hon. friend's Question. The remainder is covered by the general reply which I have just given on this subject.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: Will the right hon. Gentleman publish a return showing the number of vessels British owned but sailing under the Norwegian flag?

MR. SINCLAIR: If the hon. Gentleman will put down that Question I will consider it.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: This is an unfair charge on some of my constituents.

MR. WILLIAMSON: Is the hon. Member for Grimsby not himself interested?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: That is an insinuation which——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order, I did not allow the question so I cannot permit the reply.

Clyde Herring Fishery.

MR. AINSWORTH: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware of the damage caused to the herring fishery in the Clyde by the use of the seine net during the spawning season; whether he is aware that by the use of this net spawning fish are caught which would otherwise escape, and when caught are only of small market value, while other fish are destroyed which have no market value at the time; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made as to the advantage of establishing a close time for the seine net from 1st Februarry to 15th May in each year.

MR. SINCLAIR: The matter referred to by my hon. friend has already been the subject of prolonged inquiry and the conclusions drawn therefrom do not tend to establish the theory that this mode of fishing conducted in waters suitable thereto is necessarily injurious.

MR. AINSWORTH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that all public opinion, with one exception, is in favour of a close time for the seine net?

MR. SINCLAIR: I will accept it.

MR. WATT: Will the right hon. Gentleman institute an inquiry either by the Fishery Board or by a separate Commission into the opinions held by fishermen on the Clyde?

MR. SINCLAIR: A prolonged inquiry has already taken place on this very subject, and in my opinion there is no necessity to institute a further inquiry.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire). What was the nature of the inquiry?

MR. SINCLAIR asked for notice.

Tralee Goods Rates.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), what are the rates charged by passenger and goods trains for butter, bacon, and eggs from Tralee to London, Manchester and Liverpool; what is the value of each of those commodities imported yearly into England from Foreign countries; and what is the value of the imports from Ireland.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The Answer to my hon. friend's Question involves a tabular statement which will be more readily understood if published in the Votes to-night, which I propose to do.

Frauds on Irish Industries.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), whether his attention has been called to the prosecution and conviction of a trader at Hawick, on the 16th instant, who was charged at the instance of the Board of Trade with selling shoddy cloth as Scottish tweed, and sentenced to a month's imprisonment, is the Department aware that frauds of a similar character in respect to Irish products, such as bacon and hams, and Irish manufactures, such as tweeds, linen and lace, are perpetrated in Great Britain; what steps, if any, are being taken by the Department to check these fraudulent practices; and whether the protection of Irish industries against illegitimate competition, British and foreign, is allowed to devolve solely on the Irish Industrial Development Association.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Department have seen a report of the case mentioned in the Question. They are aware that fraudulent transactions in respect of Irish products of various kinds take place in Great Britain. The Department have officers stationed in Great Britain, whose principal duties are concerned with the detection of frauds in connection with the sale of articles of Irish agricultural produce; and through the instrumentality of these officers several prosecutions have been successfully instituted against offenders for the sale of foreign eggs as Irish, of margarine as Irish butter, and of factory butter as creamery. Other cases are at present pending. The Department cannot expend their funds in proceedings under the Merchandise Marks Acts for the prevention of frauds affecting Irish industries generally. The Board of Trade are empowered to take proceedings under those Acts in cases affecting the general interests of a trade; and the Department are prepared to submit to the Board, for such action as they may think desirable, any cases of the kind which may come under their notice. The Department are aware of the action of the Irish Industrial Development Association in this respect, and consider that much of this work can be most effectively done by such an agency which represents the traders themselves.

MR. FLYNN: Cannot the Department in addition to appointing inspectors for agriculture appoint inspectors in connection with Irish manufactures?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: No, Sir.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanark, Govan): Has the Irish Industrial Development Association taken part in electioneering?

[No Answer was returned.]

*MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): Have the officers of the Department instructions to take proceedings in connection with frauds in regard to linen sold as Irish hand-loom made when it is machine made?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL asked for notice.

Irish Exports.

MR. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), if he can state the annual total of Ireland's export trade in cattle, bacon, eggs, poultry, and butter, respectively, for the past three years.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Answer to my hon. friend's Question involves a tabular statement which will be more readily understood if published in the Votes to-night, which I propose to do.

Case of Minnie Walsh.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he intends to issue a *nolle prosequi* in the case of Minnie Walsh.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): Yes, Sir.

Firies Outrage.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on the 17th instant a man named Daniel Moynihan, when driving on an outside car from Killarney towards Firies, was attacked by three disguised men, two of whom were armed, and robbed of certain papers, and that he was threatened not to show himself in that neighbourhood again; what arrests have been made; and what sentences have been passed.

MR. CHERRY: Daniel Moynihan has given information to the police to the effect stated in the Question, and the local police are now engaged in investigating the matter. No arrests have been made up to the present.

Ballingar Outrage.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any arrests have been made in connection with the outrage committed on a herd named Patrick Collins, Ballingar, Woodford, County Galway, on 8th February last, when he and his family were attacked in their house by armed men and his wife shot in the face; and is Collins employed by a Mr. Lewis, who has been severely boycotted lately by the United Irish League, which is making a fierce effort to terrify his employees into leaving him.

MR. CHERRY: No arrests have been made in this case. Four shots were fired at the house. Two of them struck the outside wall, but the others broke the glass in a window, and some of the pellets struck Mrs. Collins in the face and neck. I am glad to say that she was not seriously injured. Collins is in the employment of Mr. Lewis, who is boycotted.

Woodford Outrage.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that John Minogue, whose house was fired into on the night of the 3rd instant, in the neighbourhood of Woodford, in the County of Galway, had previously been intimidated by shouting, groaning, and the blowing of horns, because he was in the employment of Mr. Lewis; that he was summoned before the Abbey branch of the United Irish League, and was allowed one month to clear out of his then occupation; if he is aware that at the time the outrage took place Minogue was on his way to attend a meeting of the League to ask permission to keep on his herding, and if on the day following the outrage Minogue gave up his employment; that the house of another herd on the Lewis estate within a short distance of Minogue's was fired into about six weeks before and his wife injured; will he say if the police are now aware of any reason for the firing into Monogue's house; and would he lay upon the Table of the House the report of the local police upon the subject.

MR. CHERRY: The police authorities inform me that Minogue has never complained of having been shouted or groaned at. He states that he was summoned before the United Irish League, and that he was on his way to attend a meeting of the league at the time when his house was fired into. No meeting, however, was held. Minogue was a herd in the employment of Mr. Lewis, and he gave up his employment on the following day. I stated in reply to the last Question that on 8th February the house of another herd named Collins was fired into and his wife injured. It would be quite irregular to state the suspicions of the police as to the motives for offences. In this case, I am informed, there is more than one possible motive. The reply to the concluding inquiry is in the negative.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: Does the right hon. Gentleman imply that this man had no objection to his house being fired into?

Mr. CHERRY: I said he had never complained of being shouted at or groaned at.

Westmeath Cattle Drive.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an extensive cattle-drive took place on the 17th instant, when over 100 head of cattle and sheep were removed off the lands of Lackan, Fulmorth, and Soho, Multyfarnham, county Westmeath; whether the police have assigned any reason for the outrage; how many persons have been arrested in connection with it; and what sentences were passed.

Mr. CHERRY: The facts are substantially as stated. I cannot state the surmises of the police as to the reason for driving off the cattle, No arrests have been made in the case.

Outrage on the Butler Estate.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give the House any information about the outrage which was committed on or about the 12th instant, when the house of a farmer named Moroney on the Butler estate, County Clare, was attacked by moonlighters, and a regular fusilade of guns and revolver shots fired through the windows; can he state if the police have made any arrests; and, if so, what sentences have been passed on those moonlighters.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: I suppose we shall get the same reply.

Mr. CHERRY: On the evening of 28th February several revolver and gun shots were fired outside the house of Michael Moroney, at a distance of about 20 yards from the house. Three pellets of shot entered one of the windows. The offenders were not seen, and the police have not been able to obtain evidence of their identity. No arrests, therefore, have been made. [Ironical Opposition cheers.] It seems to give hon. Members great pleasure that no evidence was obtained by the police.

Derrymore Outrage.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give the House any information about the outrage which was committed on the 12th instant, when the house of a farmer named Murphy, near Derrymore, County Clare, was raided by a party of moonlighters, who fired about a dozen shots from guns and revolvers; can he state if the police have made any arrests; and, if so, what sentences have been passed on the moonlighters.

Mr. CHERRY: On the evening of 3rd March seven or eight revolver and gun-shots were fired into and about the house of Patrick Murphy, breaking the glass in the kitchen window, but doing no other damage. It is stated that the occupants saw several men running away, but could not identify them. No arrests have been made.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman when the last arrest was made for this kind of offence.

Mr. CHERRY: I really could not say, but if the hon. Member will put down a Question I will inquire.

Warden Estate Evicted Tenants.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Estates Commissioners propose to acquire under the provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act, the six evicted untenanted farms on the unsold portion of the Warden estate, near Sneem, County Kerry, seeing that the evicted tenants are ready to occupy them.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that there are only three evicted tenants from the Warden estate for whom the Commissioners intend to provide holdings if possible. In one of these cases, the evicted farm is in the occupation of another tenant. In the two remaining cases the Commissioners have not yet considered the question of compulsorily acquiring the holdings.

Ventry Estate.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, when the Congested Districts Board will be prepared to resume the negotiations for the purchase of the Ventry estate; and whether, seeing that legal proceedings are pending for the recovery of rent and due solely to the refusal of the Board to complete the sale, the Board will direct its inspector to visit the estate at once.

MR. CHERRY: In the present state of the funds of the Congested Districts Board, no date can be fixed at which negotiations for the purchase of Lord Ventry's estate can be resumed.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Did not the Chief Secretary in the debate promise the purchase should be carried out?

MR. CHERRY asked for notice.

Cootehill Labourers' Cottages.

MR. McKEAN (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state on what evidence the Local Government Board inspector who recently held an inquiry in Cootehill as to a scheme for providing labourers' cottages in the Cootehill Rural District No. 2, decided that the lands of Sydney Jackson, Esquire, were demesne lands, in view of the fact that at the aforesaid inquiry it was proved that a fair rent had been fixed on the said lands; and whether, under the circumstances, the Local Government Board intend to take any steps to provide the applicants under the labourers scheme with sites for cottages and allotments of land, more particularly as the houses in which the applicants at present live have been condemned on two occasions by the medical officer of the district.

MR. CHERRY: The application for labourers' cottages on Mr. Jackson's lands was disallowed by the inspector on the ground that the lands were demesne lands. The lands are shown as desmesne on the ordnance survey maps, and evidence to the same effect was given on Mr. Jackson's behalf. No evidence to the contrary was given, nor was any statement made that a fair rent had been fixed on the lands. It is for the rural district council and not for the Local Government Board to take steps to provide the applicants with cottages on other lands.

MR. McKEAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire further; I am informed that a fair rent has been fixed?

MR. CHERRY: I do not think that would alter the decision of the inspector. I am afraid after the Report, the Government had no power to deal otherwise with the matter.

MR. McKEAN: Is it intended to take steps to provide any cottages for these labourers?

MR. CHERRY: If the district council neglect their duty the Local Government Board may compel them to do it.

MR. McKEAN: Yes, but——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better resume this debate another day.

Galway Outrage.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at the late assizes held at Galway a man named Michael Mahon applied for compensation for the malicious burning of his House; that Mahon swore that a threatening notice was posted upon his door a few nights before application was heard stating that if he went to Galway he was doomed, and also having a picture of a coffin drawn upon it; whether the police at the trial proved to the satisfaction of the Judge that the notice was written by Mahon; and will he say what action the Crown intend to take in the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The facts are substantially as stated in the Question, but I have no information as to whether the Judge expressed himself as being satisfied that the threatening notice was written by Mahon himself. The question as to what action, if any, should be taken in the matter is under consideration.

Dublin Port Dues.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what are the port dues now charged in Dublin on such vessels as the steamers of the London and North Western Railway Company; and what are the analogous dues charged on vessels moored at Carlisle Pier, Kingstown.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I am informed that the port dues now charged in Dublin on the steamers of the London and North-Western Railway Company are at the rate of 5½d. per ton on one-half the gross tonnage. This charge amounts to about £21. 6s. 8d. per trip for each of the Company's four passenger steamers. The Company, however, contend, I understand, that they have power to compound annually for these charges by the payment in respect of each ship of a lump sum equivalent to the dues chargeable upon six trips. The dues charged for the mail steamers which are the only steamers now using Carlisle Pier, Kingstown, are at the rate of 5s. per trip, but these are payable throughout the year.

MR. CLANCY: Am I right in assuming that the charges in Dublin for some years of the London and North Western Railway will amount to about £5,000 a year and that by going to Kingstown does the Government propose to permit them to do it on 5s. each trip?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have no means of ascertaining the first figure quoted, and I shall not be able to give specific information until the case shortly to be tried has been decided.

MR. CLANCY: Is not the case which is *sub judice* a totally different matter and dealing with the question whether the company of steamers have a right to go at all to the Carlisle Pier? This being the case, is not the Government actually paying the London and North Western Railway Company some £5,000 a year for the benefit of the English and Scottish services at the expense of the Port of Dublin.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I think the hon. Member refers to an entirely different case. I referred to a case likely to come on shortly between the London and North Western Railway Company and the Dublin Port and Harbour Board.

Licensing Compensation.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is in a position to state to what extent the amount of compensation money payable to the holders of licences suppressed under the new Licensing Bill will be increased as compared with the amount they have hitherto received under The Licensing Act, 1904.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): Hitherto the licence-holder's interest in the premises has not been calculated separately in arriving at the total compensation money payable. When the value of the licence has been arrived at as provided by the Act of 1904, the compensation has been divided in such proportions as between the licence-holder and the other parties interested as the Compensation Authority thought fit. It appears that in 1907 the average payment to a licence-holder was between £90 and £100 out of an average payment from the Compensation Funds of £921 per licence. The actual payments to the licence-holders varied very widely on either side of that average. Under the Bill, the compensation for the licence-holder is to be calculated separately from the compensation for the owners of the licensed premises, and is to be such sum as the Inland Revenue think just for "loss of business having regard to his conduct and the length of time during which he has been the holder of the licence." It is impossible to say definitely beforehand what sums will in any given case or even on the average be awarded, though they may certainly be expected to be considerably larger than the payments hitherto.

Government Licensed Property.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the new Licensing Act, it is intended that the Government shall make provision for the extinction at the end of the time limit of any licences they may hold.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not aware that the Government hold any licences, though certain Government Departments are no doubt in possession of interests in licensed premises. It will be for these Departments to consider what provision (if any) should be set aside against depreciation in the market value of such property as they do with respect to depreciation in other property for the management of which they are responsible.

*CAPTAIN FABER: Would there have to be a sinking fund in the case of property already belonging to the Department?

MR. ASQUITH: I have answered that Question.

*CAPTAIN FABER: If the houses already belong to different Departments, how can there be a sinking fund?

MR. ASQUITH: I do not understand that Question.

*CAPTAIN FABER: I will try and explain——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better give notice.

Scottish Advocates.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the facts that advocates in Scotland pay £50 stamp duty on being called to the Bar, and that solicitors there pay a similar sum on their admission, but that the latter branch of the profession are called upon annually to pay a further sum as licence duty to enable them to practice; whether he is aware that advocates have the privilege of pleading in inferior Courts while solicitors cannot plead in the Supreme Courts; and whether, in view of the fact that as a class advocates are better able to pay than solicitors, he will equalise the payments of the two branches of the profession.

MR. ASQUITH: It is the fact that solicitors are required to take out an annual certificate to practice, and that such certificate is liable to a stamp duty, while in the case of barristers or advocates no such annual stamped certificate is necessary. The law is the same in this respect in England, Scotland and Ireland. The duties and privileges of the two branches of the profession are dissimilar, and there seems no good reason for equalising these payments by way of taxation.

RIGHTS OF PRIVATE MEMBERS.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the early adjournment on the preceding night was not an unprecedented proceeding and an infringement of the rights of private Members, for whom Tuesday and Wednesday nights were specially reserved.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) said that under the circumstances it would have been unfair and inconvenient to Members if private Members' Bills in which they were interested had been taken while they were in ignorance of the fact that these particular measures were to be discussed. Moreover, he thought the adjournment was moved with the general agreement of the House.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS pointed out that some hours before eight o'clock arrangements were made to discuss the Small Holdings Bill, and several Members remained in the House for that purpose.

Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY expressed regret that the right hon. Gentleman's Bill did not come before the House, but repeated that there was a general feeling that the House should adjourn.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS: May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if under the circumstances he will give facilities for this Bill?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am afraid I could not give any such undertaking. The adjournment appears to have been assented to without a division.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Did not this difficulty arise from the unfortunate operation of the rule against anticipation, and will the right hon. Gentleman give an opportunity for the discussion of the Amendment standing in the name of the Prime Minister.

Mr. ASQUITH: That may be so, and I am as anxious as anybody to see the new Standing Order passed, but the noble Lord knows on what condition only that can be done.

Colonel SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): From what quarter of the House does the opposition to it emanate?

Mr. ASQUITH: That will be seen on reference to the Order Paper.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the course of business would be next week, and whether he could give any indication of the time when the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill and the Miners (Eight Hours) Bill would be taken.

Mr. ASQUITH: Monday is already appropriated to the Home Rule Motion. On Tuesday the Chief Secretary for Ireland will introduce the Irish University Bill. On Wednesday the first order will be the Committee stage of the Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill, which must be got through before Easter; and the next order will be the Second Reading of the Housing Bill. I cannot yet say what Supply will be taken on Thursday. The Second Reading of the Licensing Bill will be taken on Monday week, 6th April. I am unable to make any statement in regard to the Miners (Eight Hours) Bill.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON: The Licensing Bill had better be dropped after Peckham.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Secretary Gladstone, and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill) Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland, and Mr. Birrell.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee: That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Clancy, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. Healy, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Field, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Glover, Mr. Summerbell, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Lonsdale, and Mr. Barrie.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, without Amendment.

NEW BILLS.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Housing of the Working Classes, to provide for the making of Town Planning schemes, and to make further provision with respect to the appointment and duties of county Medical Officers of Health," presented by Mr. Burns; supported by Dr. Macnamara; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 178.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

"To amend The Friendly Societies Act, 1896," presented by Mr. Runciman; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 179.]

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To provide for the later opening in the morning of premises licensed for the sale of excisable liquors in Scotland," presented by Mr. Findlay; supported by Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Robert Balfour, Mr. Cross, Mr. Gulland, Mr. M'Callum, Mr. Sutherland, and Mr. Wilkie; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 180.]

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND.)

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) in asking leave to introduce a Bill to amend the laws relating to education in Scotland, said: The existing system of education in Scotland has been regarded with general satisfaction, but even the most perfect system must require, as time goes on, adjustment to new needs and new conditions. In this case the necessity for these adaptations is somewhat urgent. During the last eight years, five Bills have been introduced by successive Governments to meet the requirements of Scottish education—four Bills in the Commons and one in the Lords. Every one of these Bills has failed to become law, the last of them being the Bill of last year, of which the present Bill is a development. It may be said therefore that the object of the Bill as a whole, is not to recast the system of education but to supplement it. In the first place, it will not disturb the existing areas. We leave the parish school boards with their present powers, and we leave the existing secondary education committees, which are to be found in every county and in some large boroughs, with their powers as at present. The Act of 1872 and subsequent legislation placed no limit on the powers of school boards in Scotland in regard to the provision of education, and when I say education that includes secondary education as well as what is known in England as elementary education. This Bill in no sense curtails or abridges the full powers in this respect which the school boards in Scotland possess at present. Nothing is taken away from them, and in the fututre, as in the past, the system will rest upon what has been proved to be a secure foundation. Time, however, has shown the necessity for organising and strengthening the present provision for secondary education, and for this we now provide. As the House is aware, money is actually voted every year for the purpose of Scottish education under the Code. These grants are paid direct to the school boards, and they will continue to be so paid and they are not touched by the proposals in this Bill. The first step which this Bill takes towards more adequate provision for secondary education is to establish an Education (Scotland) Fund, into which in future will be paid all local taxation monies now intercepted and applied for the purposes of education in Scotland. This fund will therefore contain £60,000 available for secondary education under the Act of 1892, the residue grant of 1890, the agricultural rating relief grant of 1897, two sums set aside under the Act of 1892, and lastly the general aid grant, which was given to Scotland as an equivalent in respect of the English Education Act of 1902. These monies will in future be pooled together in the Education (Scotland) Fund, which, though varying slightly from time to time, will amount to something like £350,000 per annum. As to the application of this fund, in the first place it will meet certain general charges—certain prior charges—of a national character, which cannot properly be made in any locality, viz., claims from universities and central institutions such as technical colleges, agricultural colleges, and the like. These prior claims having been discharged the remaining sum will be distributed, according to their share, to the secondary education authorities. In this distribution a new principle will be applied. The existing principle of distribution, which is simply on the basis of population, obviously does not do justice to the poorer localities. A new principle of distribution is therefore proposed—population qualified by two other considerations, viz., by the cost of education in each district and by the assessable revenue in each district calculated per head of the population. The secondary education committees, being thus placed in possession of their resources, have in their turn to meet certain general charges of a local character, charges which are general to their district—the provision of other kinds of education—which cannot properly be within the compass of the secondary school boards. Again, these prior charges having been met, the balance remaining will be distributed to school boards and to managers of voluntary schools on the same principle which I have described, which will in this case be applied to the parishes. By the establishment of the application of this new principle the House will see that this scheme regards the system as a whole. The ratepayers and the parish school boards will continue to be as they have been the foundation of the system, and they will be, as they have been, the custodians of education within their district, but in future, to a greater degree than in the past, what is spent on secondary education and what is spent on higher education will be a matter of direct concern, or at any rate of real concern, to every ratepayer in every school board district. There have been criticisms from two different sources on the existing areas, and they have contributed to the opinion which was held by some in favour of an alteration of the areas. This Bill endeavours to meet those criticisms. In the first place it is said that school boards which maintain secondary schools of which advantage is taken by people residing in neighbouring districts are unfairly treated by the present system. School board centres like Perth, or Galashiels, or Montrose, for instance, have gone in at great expense for the establishment of secondary schools. Other districts send pupils to such schools, and it is urged that it would be only fair that these districts should contribute in a larger share than they can at present to the expense of establishing or of maintaining such institutions. The grievance lies in the fact that towards the expenditure of such a school board in this respect, no adequate provision is made by the neighbouring districts. This Bill provides that such contribution shall be made, and any school board which provides secondary education will receive from the Secondary Education Committee payment charged upon the rates in respect of children coming from the districts of other school boards who receive education at this centre. There is one further provision on this point—that a school board providing secondary education for children other than its own shall receive half of the excess of the cost to the rates of such provision over a certain fixed rate. These provisions, it is hoped, will act as additional make-weights in the interests of justice in this matter, and so far as the school authorities are concerned, I believe the difficulty is met. Another source of criticism of existing areas lies in the position of the teachers. For the reason I mentioned last year provisions similar to those in the Bill of last year, in regard to teachers, are to be found in this Bill—provisions namely, restoring the school boards' discretion in giving allowances to teachers in cases of disablement and of retirement. Further, let me mention that the practice has grown up in localities in Scotland in cases of a threatened dismissal of teachers of invoking the intervention of the Scottish Education Department. Persons on their own initiative through a Member of Parliament have by petition approached the Department. The Department in such cases has repeatedly refused to intervene. On the other hand, it has in some cases intervened, and by persuasion and correspondence, and sometimes by the employment of one of its own officers as a mediator in the matter, has succeeded in adjusting such disputes. A provision is contained in this Bill regularising this procedure, and in the event of a petition being presented to the Department by not less than thirty parents or guardians of children in attendance at the school, or by one-half of the parents or guardians, whichever number is the smaller, praying for an inquiry into the reasons for the proposed dismissal of the teacher, the Department may make such inquiry. Pending such inquiry, the dismissal of the teacher is not to take effect, nor is it to take effect without the consent of the Department. This provision, of course, in no way affects the power of the school board summarily to suspend any teacher in its employment from the execution of his duties. The Bill also contains additional provision for the continuation of education beyond the school age of fourteen. It lays upon the school boards the duty of making provision for continuation classes, and gives them power to make bye-laws requiring the attendance of young persons under the age of seventeen at these classes. In other directions it gives increased powers to school boards, powers in regard to medical inspection, which the House will recollect were given to English school authorities by legislation last year. Neglect to feed or clothe or keep clean a child is made an offence by the Bill under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, and with regard to the feeding of school children the Bill puts the responsibility in the first place upon the parent. If the parent or guardian is found to be at fault, he is liable to punishment. If not at fault the duty of making provision for the child is laid, not upon the parish council as in last year's Bill, but upon the school board, and upon the school board is laid the responsibility of making such temporary provision as is necessary during the inquiry. The cumulative vote is abolished, and the school board franchise is assimilated to the Parliamentary franchise. These are the main provisions of the Bill, which I may observe, is essentially a Committee Bill. It disturbs nothing, it destroys nothing, but it builds round the existing system in Scotland, which it aims at strengthening, and I trust it will be so regarded in all quarters of the House.

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland; and for other purposes connected therewith," put, and agreed to. Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Sinclair, the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Education (Scotland) Bill, "To amend the Laws relating to Education in Scotland; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 181.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, "That the proceedings on the Resolution relating to Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) [Expenses] have precedence this day of the Business of Supply."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 281; Noes, 62. (Division List No. 54.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S
Clancy, John Joseph
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley

Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St. Pancras,N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gill, James (Harrow)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats,Sir T. (Renfrew,W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Helme, Norval Watson
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hooper, A. G.
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,Sir D. Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras,E
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.
Meehan, Patrick A.(Queen's Co
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley,W.E.B. (Bradford, E.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson,Sir G Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Scott,A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H. (Somerset,E
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Wardle, George J.

Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn J A.(Worc
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faldell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Glover, Thomas
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morpeth, Viscount
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark
Thornton, Percy M.
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of the salaries and remuneration of the Director of Public Prosecutions and assistant directors appointed under any Act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, and of the Expenses incurred in pursuance of such Act."—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) moved to add at the end of the Resolution the words "such salaries not to exceed £4,000 in all." He said that he was going to advance arguments which he was sure would appeal to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite. It was extremely difficult to discuss the Resolution when its terms were not on the Paper, and when probably only the hon. and learned Member in charge of the Resolution and himself had seen them. He thought everyone would admit that it was very inconvenient that such a Motion involving the expenditure of money should not be placed upon the Paper. That was no new thing, as the House had for some years objected to that form of procedure. In 1904 the hon. Member for Halifax, who now adorned the front bench, said that an Agenda Paper was of no value unless it contained the business that was going to be done, and in that view he was backed up by the Postmaster-General who spoke of the inadvisability of not allowing the House to know the terms of the Motion. It had been the custom of the House to bring forward Motions in this way, but he thought that when "the gilded duffers" as they were called by the President of the Board of Trade, were done away with, and the Party of all the talents and capabilities were put in their place, the first thing they would do would be to allow the House to know what was to be discussed. He was surprised to find that that had not been done in this case. Last year they pointed out the inconvenience of voting money in this way, and they asked the Government to be consistent with the statements and the speeches they made in 1904 and again in 1905, but it appeared that they had spoken in vain. Nothing had been done in that direction, and they were once more confronted with a Motion the terms of which were not on the Paper. On the Second Reading of the Bill he asked a question about the expenses, and he was told that the proper place to discuss them was in Committee on the Resolution, and consequently he reserved his remarks until the present occasion. The terms of the Motion not only included the money to be voted for the payment of the salaries of the director and assistant directors, but also the expenses to be incurred by the new Department. He did not wish to put a limit to the expenses of the new Department, because he knew it would be impossible to estimate exactly what those expenses would be. The hon. and learned Gentleman thought they would be large and that the department would transact a considerable amount of business. It was no use when setting up a new department to prevent it doing the work which it was set up to perform, and he recognised that it would be quite impossible for the hon. and learned Gentleman to say exactly what the expenses would be. Consequently he had not alluded to those expenses in his Amendment. All he proposed was to limit the salaries. He had not limited the salary of the director himself, but what he had done was to put down a lump sum which could be applied to the salary of the Director of Prosecutions and to the salaries of the assistant directors. The sum he had put down was £4,000, and he did not think that was too small a sum. It would not be well in the initial stages to overload the Department with a number of fixed head officials whom it would be difficult to get rid of if it was found that the expectations of the two hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite were not realised, and if the business turned out not so heavy and excessive as was anticipated. If it was found necessary to appoint more assistant directors than the amount he had put down would permit, surely it would not be necessary to appoint them until next year. The new Department would not have any work to do until next month, and it would always be within the power of the Government to provide for an additional sum upon the Vote. He wished to point out to the Government that the Amendment, which had for its object to fix the sum voted, was identical with an Amendment moved on 8th June, 1904, supported by the hon. Member for Halifax, the Postmaster-General, the President of the Board of Trade, and the President of the Board of Education. The majority of those he had referred to had since been rewarded by being placed upon the Treasury Bench; he did not know whether that reward was in consequence of the action they took upon the date he had quoted. He specially appealed to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who had a perfectly unbiassed mind on this question. If the Government had rewarded those to whom he had alluded by putting them on the Treasury Bench it followed that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland ought to support this Amendment. The hon. and learned Gentleman was also one of those who voted on that occasion, and, therefore, he claimed his support in the division. He thought he had said enough to show that it was an excellent Amendment which should receive the support of all the Members of the Government who desired to be consistent, and he was sure they all did. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question to add the words 'such salaries not to exceed four thousand pounds in all.'"—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) in supporting the Motion, thought he could ask the co-operation of the Nationalist Members from Ireland, for on an occasion when the present Leader of the Opposition was in office and he submitted a similar Resolution in regard to the Chief Secretary's Office, they objected to it because details were not given. The objection raised on the present occasion was still better founded, because when the Prosecution of Offences Bill was before the House two days ago for

Second Reading they asked the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General for some general indication of the amount of money which would have to be expended under the powers proposed to be conferred by the Bill, but they were put off at that stage of the proceedings without getting the information they desired. He supposed that was because the law officers had not the remotest idea what the expenditure was to be. He now asked the Government to state definitely, chapter and verse, the amount of money involved, the number of persons to be appointed, and, in short, the amount of legal patronage which would be in their hands under the measure. They all desired to see the offices of the Solicitor to the Treasury and the Public Prosecutor well manned and the duties well carried out, but an important question of principle was involved, as was shown by the attitude assumed only a few years ago when the Opposition Benches were occupied by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen now on the Treasury Bench. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who took part in the debate in June, 1904, reminded the House that on a former occasion it took two or three days to get a Resolution of this character through the House of Commons because of the importance which the Irish Members attached to the principle involved. The Chancellor of the Exchequer took strong exception to any Resolution of that character being submitted to the House without the amount of money involved being made known fully in detail. The Secretary to the Treasury, who ought to be the guardian of the Treasury, was very emphatic on the subject, and the Postmaster-General made two speeches denouncing in unmeasured terms the action of the then Government in submitting to the House of Commons a proposal which did not even appear on the Notice Paper. The Secretary to the Admiralty took part in the debate and assumed a similar attitude of opposition to the way in which the proposal had been brought forward. In these days, when they were supposed to have a Government pledged to economy, he believed the public would greatly resent the idea of giving a blank cheque to any Minister or to any public officer under the control of a responsible Minister in order that an unknown number of fresh appointments should be made, and an unknown amount of money expended in legal patronage. He would remind the House that in 1884 one of the most powerful Committees ever appointed by the House of Commons investigated the whole subject of the organisation of the Department of the Solicitor to the Treasury and the Director of Public Prosecutions. That Committee differed *in toto* from the conclusions at which the Government had arrived. That might appear a small matter to the Liberal Party, but he could assure them that the day was not far distant when the subject to which the Resolution referred would be one of immediate interest in all their constituencies. If they were indifferent to the expenditure of public money, they would have to pay heavily for that neglect when they again sought the suffrages of their constituents.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) said his hon. friend was perfectly right to move the Amendment if only for the purpose of giving hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench the opportunity of explaining their position. Many of the members and supporters of the Government were strongly in favour of a different course of action from that now adopted when the Expenses Resolution with regard to aliens was discussed on 8th June, 1904. The debate which took place on that occasion was exceedingly interesting. The comments then of the Secretary to the Treasury, the Postmaster-General, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the hon. Member for Halifax, and the President of the Board of Education, applied also to the present Resolution. The Opposition desired to know precisely what expenses were to be incurred, how many officials were to be appointed, and whether an Estimate had been submitted to the Treasury. They were entitled to ask how far hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench intended to conform on the present occasion to the attitude they took up in June, 1904. It was on those grounds that he thought hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite should have an opportunity of explaining their attitude in regard to this matter.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields), who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say that he was far from denying that the point raised by hon. Gentlemen opposite was important, but he did not think that the illustration was very pertinent. On the occasion referred to additional information was asked for as to what would be the increase of the staff of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and that information could have been given without possibility of doubt. In this case they were dealing with an entirely unknown quantity. They were dealing with the approach of the operation of the Criminal Appeal Act, which had introduced a novel principle into our criminal jurisprudence, and the precise limits and the amount of work which that Act would throw upon the Department was not known. Hon. Members said that the Government should let them know what their present proposals were in regard to the increase of the staff of the Solicitor to the Treasury. He was in a position to tell them that, and he could also give a very close approximate idea of what the annual cost would be. Of course, it was impossible to say what ultimately the cost would be, and that was why the Government could not accept the Amendment, because it so limited their action that they could not appoint another clerk without the obligation of applying for a fresh Money Resolution before it could be obtained in Committee of Supply.

SIR F. BANBURY said that that was not the case, because the Amendment applied only to the Director and Assistant-Directors of Public Prosecutions. It did not apply to the clerks or the ordinary expenses of the Department. The Government could put a limit to the number of Assistant Directors.

SIR W. ROBSON said he was not dealing with the specified number of clerks, but with the principles. He would explain what the present staff was and how far it was proposed to increase the staff of the Director of Public Prosecutions. There was in that branch of the Department one assistant solicitor who acted as Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions, two chief clerks, one first-class clerk, two assistant chief clerks, five professional clerks—that was, clerks who were not necessarily qualified solicitors, but who had from experience some knowledge of legal forms. They proposed to commence simply with a new Director, who would be the head of the Department.

SIR F. BANBURY asked what his salary was to be?

SIR W. ROBSON said he would like to be a little reticent as to that. The salaries of the heads of departments ranged from £1,800 to £2,500; and if they desired to have a Director who should have legal experience—a man of position and importance and competent to deal with a post of this kind, they must get a man who had had a considerable practice. Experience meant practice. If the distinguished gentleman who had been invited to serve accepted the post, it would be at a considerable sacrifice of income to himself. They could scarcely expect to obtain the services of a professional man with a large practice except at considerable cost. Within the range he had mentioned he could not promise the House that they should get a professional man at a cheaper salary. So much for the new Director. Below him they would commence with three new professional clerks and some additional shorthand and copying clerks.

SIR F. BANBURY: No assistant directors?

SIR W. ROBSON said that they had already an assistant-director on the staff. They were taking over the present staff, which consisted of eleven men, not including the existing head, but including the assistant chief clerk, first-class clerk and assistant professional clerks. These were all to be retained. It was proposed to add to them a new Director, three more professional clerks and some additional shorthand and copying clerks.

SIR F. BANBURY asked what were the salaries of the clerks.

SIR W. ROBSON said he had not inquired into that. They were of a well-known class. He thought that the hon. Baronet, who was a man of sound business experience, would admit that that was a very proper staff, and the salary he had indicated was a very proper sum. What was desired, however, was that the Government should not have any limitation of number of staff or money, because the work might come very suddenly and they might find the Department placed in a difficulty in an emergency in which they would have to employ a staff on a larger scale. The intention of the Government was to make the initial expense on a modest scale. For some little time he hoped to retain the assistance of Lord Desart. The new Director would be appointed without any suggestion or suspicion of political interest—a purely professional man. It had been said that possibly they might save an Assistant Director on the Civil side by appointing the present Assistant Director as the new Director on the criminal side. Of course, the appointment of the new Director would be a very great relief to the present Director, who would have more time on his hands than at present. He could not lay too much stress upon that, because, speaking for himself, he knew the enormous increase that had taken place in the amount of work in the Department in connection with the business of the Admiralty and the Education Board. Therefore, he did not think there would be very much saving on the Civil side. In regard to another point raised by hon. Gentlemen opposite, it was thought desirable in 1879 to appoint a Director of Public Prosecutions in order not to leave the initiative in criminal prosecutions always in private hands. The system of criminal prosecution in this country did not compare favourably with that in some Continental countries. Sir John Maule was the first Director of Prosecutions appointed, but all he did—whether it was all he was bound to do was another matter—was to decide what cases were fit to be dealt with by a Public Prosecutor, and having decided that he proceeded forthwith to send the papers to a practising solicitor. That went on for five years, but it was found not to be very satisfactory, and then came the appointment of the Committee of 1884, with whose Report he was not disposed to quarrel. As he had pointed out, there had been an immense increase in the work of the Civil branch of the Department within the last few years. The work of the Charity Commissioners had also been put on the Solicitor to the Treasury; and when he came into office he was surprised at the amount of important and detailed work which came before the Department. A few years back a step was taken by the late Government in the interests of economy in regard to the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the arrangements in regard to which were found not to be very satisfactory. Therefore they established a branch of this office at the Law Courts and a great deal of work was carried out there. All these things taken together made the situation very different from what it was in 1884. He did not complain of the criticism as unjust, but after all it was one which could be met by a fair explanation, and he hoped the House would negative the Amendment and allow the Government to obtain the Resolution.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. and learned Gentleman had made an extremely able and temperate speech, but he was careful with his astuteness and knowledge of the Law Courts not to allude to the first question he asked him, which was one of the most important points of his speech. He had asked him why it was that he himself and other hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House had in 1904 drawn attention to the fact that these Motions were not put on the Paper, but were left at the desk in the clerks' hands. Under such circumstances, unless one knew the ropes he was perfectly unable to know what was going on, and consequently he could not draw the attention of the House to it. He had asked the hon. and learned Gentleman why he had allowed that course to be pursued on that occasion, and whether in the future he would take care to see that, as far as he was concerned, it should not happen again. He did not ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to bind the whole Government, but he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be present in view of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman took the very line that he was taking, in a speech made in 1904 on the subject. He supposed the hon. and learned Gentleman, not having an answer to his question, brushed the matter aside and gave them an extremely interesting speech to take off their attention, hoping that that would cause them to forget the Question that had been put; but having some little experience of legal gentlemen he was always exceedingly careful to see that they did not get the better of him, and therefore he watched the hon. and learned Member to see whether he answered his Question. As he had not done so, perhaps he would answer it now. He did not think the hon. and learned Gentleman had given any reason why his Amendment should not be accepted. It provided that until next year, so far as Directors and Assistant-Directors were concerned, the amount should not exceed £4,000 in all. But the hon. and learned Gentleman, instead of dealing with that point, gave them a long and interesting *resume* of how the clerks were to be appointed, what they would have to do, and where they would come from. He said, however, that there would be only one Director and Assistant-Director, but if the work was heavy they might have to appoint a larger staff, and it would not be desirable to stop the work, if Parliament was not sitting, by not appointing additional clerks. But his Amendment dealt with that point. The hon. and learned Gentleman might appoint fifty or sixty additional clerks so long as he only appointed one Director and Assistant Director, and he thought the sum as limited by his Amendment was ample. If it was necessary, not only to have another staff, but to have another Director and Assistant Director, they could increase the number of the latter next year, and if the hon. and learned Gentleman did not accept the Amendment he must divide the Committee upon it. He was quite certain that the hon. and learned Gentleman would do his best to carry out the intentions of the Government, as approved by Parliament. The intentions of the Government might be all very well, but they were sometimes changed, and circumstances over which they had no control compelled them to do sometimes that which they did not like to do. Therefore, it was not enough to say that it was the intention of the Government to do so-and-so, and they ought to put some limit on the expenditure which the House was going to sanction. He did not think it would be desirable to limit the expenditure in the office as a whole, but he did think it would be possible to limit it in regard to the salaries given to the Director and Assistant-Director. It was one of the charges made against them at the last election that the control of the House of Commons over the expenditure was departing, and that it was going into the hands of the Cabinet; and it was said that if the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite came into power they would revive that control. That was exactly what he was trying to do. He moved the Amendment in no hostile spirit, but he thought they ought to know what they were going to spend in the coming year.

Sir W. ROBSON was understood to say that, with regard to the first Question of the hon. Baronet, it related to some question of Parliamentary procedure, and he had humbly to confess that he knew nothing of that subject. As far as Parliamentary procedure was concerned he consulted his right hon. friends who were much better able than he was to deal with matters of that sort.

Sir F. BANBURY asked if the hon. and learned Gentleman would reply to his Question ?

Sir W. ROBSON said, as he understood the hon. Baronet required a pledge that in future some Parliamentary offence should not be repeated, all he could say was that he would endeavour to ascertain what that Parliamentary offence was, and as far as he could he would endeavour not to repeat it. From the hon. Baronet's remarks it appeared that he did not read the Resolution in the sense in which he saw it was taken. It related to expenditure which might be resorted to in regard to salaries, and the hon. Gentleman said that certain salaries should not exceed £4,000. He would point out, however, that under the scheme of the Government, so far as additional expenditure was concerned,

£4,000 would be very much in excess of what they desired. He, therefore, did not want to give a pledge beyond the necessities of the case. The Treasury were very vigilant on the matter of departmental increases of staff, and that, was, in the view of the Government, a sufficient reason for not accepting the Amendment.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said the last remark which had fallen from the hon. and learned Member was not encouraging as showing any inclination to meet the very clear case which had been advanced from that side of the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman thought the Amendment of his hon. friend was not sufficiently drastic, but he would have great pleasure, if the present Amendment were rejected, in moving to limit the salaries to £3,000, and then perhaps he would be carrying out the intentions of the Attorney-General. He rose chiefly to call attention to what he considered was a very serious matter, viz., a question of Parliamentary practice, affecting public expenditure at large, in reference to which the hon. and learned Gentleman could not give them any assurance or indication of what the Government intended to do in the future. It was to be regretted—indeed, it almost amounted to a scandal—that no Cabinet Minister was on the Ministerial Bench to deal with a matter affecting the Government as a whole. The case was made even more serious by the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the guardian of the public purse, himself supported the cause which they were advocating that afternoon, and voted, no longer than four years ago, in support of the view he was now bringing forward. It was treating the House of Commons with the greatest discourtesy for Cabinet Ministers not to be present to explain the reasons for their change of policy; they simply ran away and hid themselves behind Mr. Speaker's Chair. He hoped his hon. friend would carry the Amendment to a division.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) thought after what had fallen from the Attorney-General, it was obvious that the Bill was going to be a very expensive affair to the country, and that it would cost much more than was anticipated. He thought that, in view of the quotations from the speeches of distinguished Gentlemen opposite, in regard to the bringing forward of Money Resolutions, they had been treated with very scant courtesy. Surely it was not too much to demand that the hon. and learned Gentleman should have carefully thought out the details of what would be necessary when the Bill became law, for the first year at all events. It was not fair that the Government should attempt to smuggle through a large Estimate like this, that they should ask for a blank cheque on the Exchequer, without a single member of the Committee having the slightest knowledge of it. Debates had taken place on kindred subjects before and the present Financial Secretary on a similar Vote in 1904 said—

> "The Committee had no information as to whether it was meant to add a typewriter or an office boy to the office now under discussion."

The question now was of much greater importance. It was the question of the cost of a Director of Public Prosecutions and certain Assistant Directors to carry out the provisions of the Bill. Surely it was not too much to ask that some member of the Government should put a limit on the sum the Committee was asked to vote. Surely it was not too much to ask the Government to say that the cost of working the Act this year should not exceed £30,000 or £40,000. The complaint was that there was no limit put upon the Vote now asked for. The Attorney-General had appealed to the Committee not to press for a precise limit, but it would not be going too far to say that the salary of the Director of Public Prosecutions should be for this year £4,000. It could always be revised if it was found that he had more work to do than was at present anticipated. But no assurance was held out that the Government would guarantee that for twelve months the cost should not exceed a certain amount. He objected to the indefinite manner in which the Government without any notice attempted to smuggle large Votes through the House without putting them on the Paper, and as a protest he should certainly support the junior Member for the City of London in the lobby.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 49; Noes, 273. (Division List No. 55.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn Sir Alex. F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craig, Charles Curtis Antrim, S.)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Doughty, Sir George
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hills, J. W.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Claude Hay.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Black, Arthur W
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duckworth, James
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hogan, Michael
Hooper, A. G.
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis

King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mallet, Charles E.
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen'sCo.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murnaghan, George
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, Augustine Cork)
Roche, John Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whitbread, Howard
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. Hull, W.)
Wilson, J.W. Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of the salaries and remuneration of the Director of Public Prosecutions and assistant directors appointed under any Act of the present session to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884, and of the Expenses incurred in pursuance of such Act."

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

SUPPLY.

(CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES.)

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. SPEAKER do now leave the Chair."

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.), in moving, 'That the cost of administration in Ireland is excessive, is unduly burdensome to the people of that country, and is steadily increasing; that the expenditure is not subject to Irish control and is not allocated or administered in such a way as to promote efficiency in government or national well-being; that, so far from alleviating the injury inflicted on Ireland by over-taxation, this waste of her resources on certain services tends rather to aggravate it; and that this condition of affairs constitutes an intolerable grievance and demands the immediate attention of Parliament," said the subject was one which had many recommendations to the attention of the House, though it could not lay claim to novelty. The wasteful expenditure on Irish administration was admitted, but so far not amended, and the taxation of Ireland had formed the subject of many debates in that House. As long ago as 1840, the matter of extravagance in Irish government was first raised by O'Connell, and from that day to this there had been a long succession of vigorous and entirely futile protests from those benches. The subject was one of enormous gravity, going down to the root of Irish decay and discontent. It had been said that his Motion was the money argument for Home Rule. The education question in Ireland, the political condition of the country, and the excessive cost of administration were three questions which together formed one subject of the deepest significance. The present Motion was swallowed up in the Motion of his hon. friend the Member for Waterford to be moved on Monday; and for that reason, and for the technical reason of procedure, which the House would not fail to understand, he might state that the purpose of this proposition was to ventilate the subject and to bring the facts connected with it under discussion, though Members on those benches did not intend to proceed to a division. The Motion on the Paper did not put the whole money argument in favour of Home Rule; it put only half of it. The whole money argument included the question of the incidence of taxation in Ireland. This Motion dealt primarily with expenditure in Ireland and dealt only with taxation in relation to expenditure in the same way as the obverse side of a penny was related to the reverse side. Happily in that House it was not necessary to engage in any sort of historical reference. That had been done in a masterly fashion in a document with which he supposed those interested in Irish subjects were thoroughly conversant—he referred to the Report of the Commission on the Financial Relations of England and Ireland, appointed by the last Liberal Government. He did not propose to discuss any of the findings of the Commission. But there were one or two facts which he thought ought to be very briefly noted, for this reason. Many people in Ireland had thought that the effect of the Report would be to awaken and restore activity to the conscience of England. But the conscience of England, he was sorry to say, in regard to Irish finance had apparently discovered some soporific of which they would all like to learn the secret. At any rate, the conscience of England had not been awakened by the Report. Substantially the findings of the Commission were these, that from the date of the amalgamation of the Irish and English Exchequers down to the date of the Commission, the taxation per head of the population in England had been reduced by 11 per cent., while the taxation per head of the population of Ireland had been increased by 170 per cent. They found, in the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, used in 1897, that the real fact was that Ireland was over-taxed to the extent of £2,500,000 a year, though the actual figure was much closer to £2,725,000. If they accepted the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—and it could not be controverted—they would find that at the date of the Commission the accumulated conscience money due by England to Ireland touched a figure somewhere between £400,000,000 and £410,000,000. He had said that in Ireland, and in England also, many assumed that the Report which brought to light facts of which many public men might before have been ignorant without any grave discredit to themselves, would have marked the beginning of a new epoch in Irish finance. They assumed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he came to budget for Irish expenditure, would have made the Report his study not by day only, but would have slept with it under his pillow at night. The only thing he had done effectively with it was to fall asleep on it. So far from things having improved in reference to extravagant government in Ireland, they had gone back enormously since the Commission reported in 1894. Since then the cost of home government in Ireland had been increased by £2,062,239. The home government in Ireland, since the facts contained in the Report were brought to light, had increased from £1 4s. 6d. per head of the population to £1 15s. The total cost of all services in Ireland had increased by £1,799,655. The population in the meantime had fallen by 192,000. As a test of whether the country was advancing or not, they took the yield of income-tax per 1d. in the £, and they found that the yield was almost precisely to-day what it was in 1894, whereas in both England and Scotland it had increased by somewhere about 50 per cent. These facts showed how the Report of the Financial Relations Commission had awakened the conscience of England. Let him take another item of curious significance. Let him take the figures showing what was called their Imperial contribution, or, as he should prefer to put it, what it cost them to be associated with this Empire of which they formed part. The Imperial contribution had fallen from £2,073,984 in 1894 to £1,811,500 in 1906–7. The Annual Return from which the figures were taken was, he thought, the most thoroughly separatist document to be found amongst the publications of that House. If there was one thing that the Act of Union made clear, it was that in future arrangements there should be no discrimination with regard to expenditure between either of the contracting parties, Great Britain and Ireland. The formula of the Act of Union was that Great Britain and Ireland should enter into this Union, and that in future there would be taken from each country by way of taxation in accordance with its taxable capacity and that there should be given to each country in accordance with its administrative needs. There were to be no exemptions and abatements with regard to taxation, so far as Ireland and Scotland were concerned, and there was to be no discrimination whatever with regard to the cost of administrative services that might be regarded as Irish, those that might be regarded as English, and those that might be regarded as Imperial. Therefore this Annual Return afforded an interesting illustration of a fact that was not indeed new to any of them, that the Act of Union had two things against it—first, that it was carried, and, secondly, that it had never been carried out. But let him take the item of Imperial expenditure—the Irish contribution to the Army, the Navy, and the diplomatic establishment. He had pointed out the grave objection in principle to the separation of Imperial expenditure in the Return, but there were much graver objections than that. There was a grave and fatal objection to the amount. Last year the contribution of Ireland to Imperial services—and he thought this contribution was a good test of the cost and expenditure of home government—was less than £2,000,000. In 1859 it was more than £5,000,000. In 1869 it was £4,000,000, and in 1879, £3,000,000, though taxation was steadily increasing. So voracious was the appetite of Dublin Castle that it had eaten up the entire increase of taxation, and if matters went on on this basis much longer—not that he should regret the eventuality—England and the Empire would be running Ireland at a loss. He had said that in regard to the item of £1,811,500 which was to be found in the Appropriation Account of 1906–7 there were grave objections and grave mistakes. In the first place, the entire cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary, which was regulated by Imperial and not Irish policy and ideas, was returned as expenditure for the benefit of Ireland. He could appeal to much higher authority than he could lay claim to be for saying that a large portion of the £1,300,000 at present expended on the Irish police ought to be set down as a contributon to the expenses of the Empire. Sir Edward Hamilton when questioned before the Financial Relations Commission on the point said, and it had never been disputed, that part of the police charge in Ireland might be considered an Imperial charge.

Then in reply to a further question he said—

> "I think it would be fair to transfer £600,000 of the change from the Irish to the Imperial Parliament."

That was the situation in 1894. He saw in the Returns which were issued from year to year that at least £1,000,000 to £1,350,000 ought to be set down as the contribution by Ireland to Imperial services, and her actual contribution was closer to £3,000,000 than to £1,800,000. But he did not want to discuss that matter in any detail. The Returns proceeded to show, according to the fashion in which they were arranged, Ireland's contribution to what were spoken of and understood in that sense as expenses of Empire, at something less than 2 per cent. of the total cost of these services. If they took £3,000,000, it, with her actual contribution percentage, was up to about 5 per cent. of the other services. For that burden borne by the people of Ireland what did Ireland get? What was the Empire worth to them? Empire meant an Army. The Army in these humanitarian days was not to be employed for the purpose of making war, but only for the purpose of resisting invasion. Would any invader be more terrible, more fatal to their prosperity than a Government which in fifty years had reduced her population by half? Then again in these humanitarian days the Navy was not to be employed for the purpose of making war, but only as an insurance on sea-borne commerce. A hundred years of the Act of Union and sixty years of free trade had left Ireland no sea-borne commerce. A third benefit which they were supposed to get in return for their contribution to the expenses of Empire was that they could employ Imperial credit when they had large national transactions to carry through. They saw the value of Imperial credit when as a result of that extremely immoral and, what was still more important for them, expensive war in South Africa, Consols and Land Stock had run down to 87 per cent. The benefit which they secured from the tottering and falling credit of the Empire at that time was that they put Land Stock on the market and paid the fourteen points difference out of the pockets of the Irish taxpayers. So much with regard to that portion of the burden of government laid upon the people of Ireland at present which represented the cost and expenses of Empire. The main subject of discussion was with regard to home government. They complained of three points with regard to home government. They complained of the amount spent on home government and of the allocation and administration of that amount. They in Ireland had never had any desire or ambition for cheap government simply as such. Just as according to the old story when a traveller came to a place where he saw a gallows erected he knew he was in a civilised country, so progressive government was to a large extent marked by increase in taxation. Some Governments would be cheap at any price, and Governments such as existed in Ireland would be dear at any price. Their complaint had always been that too much money was spent on the government of Ireland as a whole, and that if they reduced the amount by from 30 to 50 per cent., redistributed it, and brought their administrative house into order, they could get all their services more properly and efficiently discharged than under the present system. So far were they from desiring to reduce the amount expended on such services as education and agriculture that they would gladly take £500,000 or £1,000,000 from the other Irish services and transfer the money to education and to the development of the Department of Agriculture. He did not think he was going beyond the bounds of reason, or of political sense, in saying that under an Irish Government these would be the two most important services in the entire economy of the nation. What they complained of was that too much money was spent on the wrong things and not enough on the right things. Every agency that had for its function to repress the people, to keep them in what was humorously called order, was financed to the full, overstaffed and over-salaried. Every agency such as education and agriculture, which had for its purpose to build up the material and moral prosperity of the country, was under-staffed, and as far as salaries went absolutely starved. They called at once for a reduction of the total amount spent on Irish government and for a redistribution of the cost of the repressive services in favour of services of development. That was the position they had always taken up. He wished the House clearly to understand that every single penny of expenditure on Irish government was Irish money. He thought the mind of the House had been confused, certainly the mind of the public outside had been confused, by these perpetual references to Irish grants and exchequer contributions. In regard to this question it was well to understand the process at the outset. What happened was simply that the Treasury drained the Irish taxes into her reservoir, retained much of the contribution for Imperial services, and returned the rest for Irish services. Every penny, every fraction of the money, was derived from Irish sources, and its expenditure could not be properly managed until it was made subject to Irish control. He would also deal with another argument mentioned in the first clause of the Motion, of which much was heard. It was probably the most fantastic argument ever employed. In reply to the Report of the Royal Commission it was sometimes said that excessive expenditure in Ireland was a set-off against over-taxation. Then it was discreetly conveyed that this extravagant amount all came from the pockets of the British taxpayer. That set-off argument, that contention that amends could be made for over-taxation by over-expenditure, was perhaps the most fantastic of the many fantastic arguments employed on this subject. It was tantamount to saying: "Yes, it is true I get your money from you by the methods of the thief, but then I make amends by spending it after the fashion of the profligate." That was the conclusive answer. Another point which nobody seemed to have raised was that this was accounted for a good deal by the Treasury policy. The Treasury, however, was not able to ignore that Report in arranging its Estimates and controlling this expenditure. It attempted to meet it in this way. It was said that in 1894 the Commission reported that they were paying one-eleventh of the total cost of government in this country, while the taxable capacity of Ireland was estimated as being not more than one-twentieth. Now the Treasury replied: "Yes, but in 1906-7 you have not been paying one-eleventh, but only one-fourteenth or one-fifteenth." That was perfectly true. He would like for a moment to contrast the progress of the population and wealth made by England and Scotland with the decline of Ireland since 1894. Since the date of the Commission the United Kingdom had grown in population considerably more than the entire population of Ireland. They frequently heard in fiscal discussions that England had advanced in wealth and prosperity in a fashion entirely unprecedented. Ireland, however, during the same period had fallen in population by 200,000, whilst the yield of the income-tax had not only not advanced, but had only been maintained at the figure at which it stood in 1894. The Act of Union prescribed that the expenditure should be in proportion not to Ireland's contribution, but to her needs. A good test would be that when the expenditure of a country exceeded a certain definite proportion the total national income of that country was over-governed, or the Government was over-financed. Obviously, the best means of arriving at a conclusion was to take the government of Ireland and compare it with that of Scotland and England, and it might also be useful to compare it with some small European nations. Comparing the figures for Ireland with those for England, they would find at this moment that England was spending one-forty-second part of her total national income, whilst Ireland was found to spend one-eighth or one-ninth of her total national income. According to the book published by the hon. Member for N. Paddington, between £70,000,000 and £75,000,000 per annum represented the national income of Ireland, whilst £1,700,000,000 to £1,800,000,000 represented the income of England. Deducting a subsistence allowance of £12 per head of the population and taking what was left as the taxable margin of the national income, it left a margin of £3 per head in Ireland and £30 per head in England. Of that £3 in Ireland £2 was taken in national and £1 in local taxation. Those were the salient and sterling facts which confronted them upon this question. Every penny of the sums they were discussing was Irish money drawn from Irish sources. Upon whom in Ireland did the burden of this extravagant government fall? It fell on the weakest shoulders. It should be remembered that in England they raised the revenue as to 50 per cent. by direct taxation and as to 50 per cent. by indirect taxation, but in Ireland the proportion was 73 per cent. indirect and 27 per cent. direct taxation. That meant that in Ireland they were compelled to pay what it had been stated would never be tolerated in this country, namely, food taxes. The man in Ireland who bore the cost of this extravagant government was the indirect taxpayer, such as the small farmer and the agricultural labourer. Mr. Wilson Fox had conducted an exhaustive inquiry into the wages of the agricultural population of the three kingdoms. He found that the average weekly wage of the agricultural labourer in England was 18s. 3d.; in Wales, 17s. 3d.; in Scotland, 19s. 3d.; and in Ireland, 10s. 11d. It was County Mayo and places like that that were bearing the burden of this extravagant government. The average wage of the labourer in County Mayo at this moment was 8s. 9d. a week. He had said that the cost of government of a country, whatever else it might be determined by, was determined in large part by the resources and taxable margin of the income of its inhabitants. What was the position of the inhabitants of the congested districts in the West? Let him read from the evidence given by Mr. W. L. Micks before the Railway Commission—

> "There are two classes of people in the congested districts, namely, the poor and the destitute. Nearly all the inhabitants are on one dead level of poverty."

Their dietary was almost vegetable. They had one meal a day. A little salt fish, or a small piece of coarse American bacon as a sort of relish with their food, but the majority of the people had nothing but vegetables, Indian meal, porridge, potatoes and bread baked by themselves. They also drank tea to a large extent. With 73 per cent. of the cost of Irish government paid by indirect taxation—that was the man who was bearing the burden of government in Ireland. There was no tax on meat in Ireland. They were told that never in England would there be a tax on meat. That did not matter to the inhabitant of the congested district, who did not eat meat, because he could not afford it. He found tea and sugar the prime necessity of his life, and Ireland paid about £605,000 on those articles towards the cost of Irish administration. Tobacco was another necessity of his life, and from tobacco they derived £1,500,000 of the cost of the same administration. They had always protested from the Nationalist benches that those engaged in educational work in Ireland were under-salaried and that education was practically starved. He was aware that the moment one touched upon the subject of education one naturally fell into the morass of equivalent grants. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had repudiated the principle of equivalent grants, but although the right hon. Gentleman had rejected that principle as fallacious and misleading it had been employed by the Treasury in arranging the probate duty and the local taxation account. He was glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover in his place, because he might lay claim to being the parent of the most remarkable kind of equivalent grant, that so-called equivalent grant out of which Irish education was paid for, which was started in 1902. At that time something like £1,400,000 was given to help education in England, and £185,000 to Ireland. In the interval that £1,400,000 had almost doubled in England, and the amount for Scotland had nearly been doubled, but in Ireland the amount remained at £185,000. In the first place it was not equivalent, in the second place it was not devoted to education, and in the third place it at present suffered from the Irish and still more fatal disease of non-existence. Part of it was swallowed up in the morass of the Land Act for Ireland, and another part was employed by the Board of Works. The principle of equivalent grants having been abandoned in regard to education, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was driven back on the Act of Union, and that was that Ireland should get as much as it needed. He supposed he might assume that the needs of Ireland in regard to education were not less than those of England or Scotland, and that the power of Ireland to supply those needs out of local resources were not larger than that of England or Scotland. The figures showed a sinister contrast between the three countries. He wished to say a word in passing in regard to the other two branches of education in Ireland. As to University education he would only say that he hoped that within a very few days Ireland was going to get what she wanted. The wise Government which ordered all things in Ireland prescribed that £45,000 more should be spent every year on the policing of the City of Dublin alone, than on the entire fabric of University education. For the purposes of secondary education in Ireland not one penny came by way of Parliamentary Vote. Secondary education in Ireland had never been discussed in the House on the Estimates. The Board which controlled secondary education had two incomes—a fixed income derived from the Irish church surplus, which was, of course, an exclusively Irish fund, and a fluctuating income derived from the yield of the local taxation account. The House, which had had recent experience of the influence of beer and Christianity, would be prepared to find associated in Ireland education and whisky. The fluctuating income of the Intermediate Board did not depend on the number of students or the educational needs. It depended on the amount of whisky consumed in Ireland. It laid on the Irish parent the duty of getting drunk on Saturday night, in order that there might be money to educate his children on Monday morning. There was no Parliamentary Vote for Irish secondary education. For English secondary education there was voted £802,000, and for Scottish secondary education £159,500. In regard to primary education, the figures showed the most striking contrast. For the current year, the Estimate for England was £13,594,150; for Scotland, £2,048,557, and for Ireland, £1,408,360, the amount per head of the population being 8s. 8d. for Scotland, 7s. 10½d. for England, and 6s. 5d. for Ireland. On the basis of so much per head of the population, Ireland should have £500,000 more, in order to bring the Estimate up to a level with that for Scotland, and £320,000 more to bring it up to the English level. A striking feature in connection with education in this country had been the growing willingness of the people to spend money on education. The figures showed that between 1900 and 1907 the money voted for primary education had increased 43 per cent. for England and 51 per cent. for Scotland, while for Ireland the increase had only been 1½ per cent. In the face of these figures he was surely justified in stating that the service of education in Ireland was starved. That was the Treasury side. Now let them take the teaching side. Was there any reason why teachers should be less well paid in Ireland? He saw none. The payment of male teachers in England worked out at an average of £160; in Scotland £179; in Ireland only £102. For women, the average was: England, £109; Scotland, £109; Ireland, £82. Then let them take the point of view of the child. He was sorry not to see present any of the Unionist Members for Ulster to take an interest in this discussion. He would refer to the Report of the National Board, 1906, in which would be found the statements of Mr. Kelly, the senior inspector of the Belfast district. In that Report Mr. Kelly said it was a fact that the prosperous and progressive City of Belfast was the most backward part of the British Empire in the matter of school accommodation. He was sorry that the Member for East Down, who was so anxious to float the Union Jack upon the national schools in order to warm the patriotism of the children, should not be present to co-operate with them in getting more money to buy fuel to keep the children's feet warm. Mr. Kelly concluded by referring to the Report of the sub-inspector of his district. Let it be remembered that this was four years after the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover, in dealing with the Benevolent Grant, had said that £185,000 a year was more than Ireland could usefully spend upon that subject. The sub-inspector wrote that in several schools in Belfast the class-rooms were not heated at all; the cloak-rooms, porches, and passages were occasionally used as class-rooms, and were not, of course, heated. In one cloak-room where there was accommodation for 28 children he found 56, in another with accommodation for 26 he found 67, in another with accommodation for 34 there were 70, and in another with accommodation for 84 there were 174 children. In an entire school he found accommodation for 209, the actual number of children in attendance being 401. In another school he found 62 children working in a room 16 feet by 17 feet 6 inches, and he added that in that case he wrote to the manager, pointing out that the Black Hole of Calcutta, in which there had been 146 persons was a room 28 feet by 20 feet. If he had made the calculation he would have found that the persons in the Black Hole got 50 per cent. more air-space than the persons in the school in Belfast, but the Inspector pointed out that the only difference was that the poisoning in the latter case was a little slower, but none the less certain. Yet the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had said that more than the amount referred to could not be usefully used.

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover) said that his position then and now was that the equivalent grant and the money paid for the education of children ought not to be diverted to purposes that should properly be met out of building grants.

Mr. KETTLE said it would certainly be admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had worked for the advancement of Ireland in various ways, and they much regretted that a certain development of Unionist policy relegated him after a brief interval to unofficial obscurity and set in his place a representative with the most reactionary ideas that ever congregated in an English brain. He turned to consider the general vices which marked Irish administration as a whole. The object of administration was to get money used for the purposes for which it was voted and at the same time to secure that as little as possible should adhere to the transmitting hands of officials. The fundamental vice of the administration in Ireland was that there were, as everybody knew, two Civil Services—a permanent Civil Service and a casual, peripatetic service, a system of fixed and wandering stars. The permanent Civil Service was recruited by competitive examination and the members of it were generally kept in obscure positions. The peripatetic was composed to a large extent of gentlemen, who were what was known as well connected, who had friends at the Castle who could bring influence to bear, and whose only qualification was, in the words of a famous letter read in that House, that they could be trusted not to sell the pass and not to forget their friends. These gentlemen were, as every head of a department knew, always looking for something to inspect. It did not matter very much what it was as long as they got two guineas a day and subsistance money. They were prepared to inspect anything from seed potatoes to guipure lace. That Civil Service had to be provided before the other was attended to, and anyone who was well acquainted with administration in Ireland would agree with him that, in a very large number of cases, they had a deliberate duplication of offices so that occupations might be found for certain gentlemen. Even the Manure Department, over which the Member for South Tyrone presided, was not free from this vice, which, of course, the right hon Gentleman had inherited from his predecessors. Let them compare Ireland with Scotland, the population of the two countries being pretty much the same. Scotland, which had a more complex industrial population naturally calling for more expensive government than Ireland, had for reasons in no way discreditable to it to deal with a larger volume of crime. With the same population as Scotland and less crime, Ireland, with the children of Belfast sitting four deep on the staircase, spent on law and police £3 for every £1 spent in the case of Scotland. He would take a significant figure which would illustrate the matter still more. The Report of the Commissioners for Inland Revenue for 1906 showed, in the case of Scotland, that the number of officials assessed for income tax was 963. In Ireland it was 4,539. The gross income of the officials assessed was, in Scotland, £311,694; in Ireland, £1,412,520, or more than four and a half times the amount spent in Scotland, where there was the same population and less to do. For every £1 spent by the State in England on education 17s. went to education and 3s. to office expenses. In the case of Scotland 16s. 2d. went to education and 3s. 10d. to office expenses. For every £1 spent in Ireland only 13s. 6d. went to education and 6s. 6d. was spent on office expenses. With regard to the judicial establishment he was not failing in proper respect for the Judges, for they had always been proud in Ireland, especially those who were members of the legal profession, that the Irish Bench had been adorned by some of the most powerful and subtle legal intellects of which there was record in the history of English law.

*MR. SPEAKER: The salaries of the Judges are not borne on the Estimates. It is only matters which are on the Estimates which the hon. Member can discuss.

MR. KETTLE said that only the Irish County Court Judges' salaries were on the Parliamentary Vote and perhaps they were not worth discussing. Let him, however, give the House the figures of the Prisons Boards in Scotland and Ireland. There were two reasons for this; first, because the two Boards did precisely the same work, and secondly, they did it under precisely the same Acts. He knew that hon. Gentlemen above the gangway thought he was going to gratify their well-known appetite for statistics of crime. In Scotland the average daily number of prisoners under the charge of the Prisons Board in 1906 was 2,906, and in Ireland 2,541. The cost of the Irish Prisons Board was £107,012; and of the Scottish, £87,139. The explanation was given in the third column of the Report, which stated that the number of convicts under the charge of the Prisons Board in Scotland was 2,906 and the attendants 454; in Ireland the number of convicts under the Prisons Board was 2,541 and the attendants 628. Then let them take the case of pensions in the Police Force. In Ireland they were paying very much more than in Scotland for the ghosts, or rather the retired members of the Force. If the Police Estimates were looked at it would be found that the pensions to the Royal Irish Constabulary amounted to 50 per cent. of their actual pay; and that the pensions of the Dublin Metropolitan Police amounted to 30 per cent. of their actual pay. He would be asked: What do you suggest should be done? Well, their cardinal suggestion was that the money allocated to the service of Ireland should be better distributed. Economies should be made in the police and judicial establishments, which were the last surviving relic of twenty years of resolute government. When that policy of resolute government was replaced by another system, that costly relic ought to go by the board. When Mr. Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill in 1886 he foresaw the development of Irish expenditure. Mr. Gladstone said—

> "I will state one other striking fact with regard to Irish expenditure. The House would like to know what an amount has been going on—and is at this moment going on—of what I may call a waste of public money, demoralising in its influence upon both countries. The civil charges *per capita* at the moment are, in Great Britain, 8s. 2d. per head, and in Ireland, 16s. They have increased in Ireland in the last fifteen years by 63 per cent. and my belief is that if the present legislative and administrative systems be maintained, you must make up your minds to a continual, never-ending, and never-to-be limited augmentation."

When Mr. Gladstone spoke the Civil Government charges in Ireland were 16s. per head; they now amounted to 28s. 5d. The augmentation went on and they believed now, and always did believe, that they could not have clean, cheap, and effective administration in Ireland until they brought that administration under the control of a democratic Assembly. They believed that the evils resulted from the fact that the political centre of Ireland was not in Dublin, but at Whitehall. They were asked: What is your remedy? His answer was that the proper remedy would be found in the Motion to be made by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford on Monday next. He begged to move.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) formally seconded the Motion.

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'the cost of Administration in Ireland is excessive, is unduly burdensome to the people of that country, and is steadily increasing; that the expenditure is not subject to Irish control and is not allocated or administered in such a

way as to promote efficiency in government or national well-being; that, so far from alleviating the injury inflicted on Ireland by over-taxation, this waste of her resources on certain services tends rather to aggravate it; and that this condition of affairs constitutes an intolerable grievance and demands the immediate attention of Parliament,'—(*Mr. Kettle,*)— instead thereof."

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) said his hon. friend and colleague in the representation of Tyrone had stated that the question was not a novel one. He (Mr. Russell) had spoken on this subject more than once from below the gangway, and if any hon. Member would read the Resolution paragraph by paragraph he did not believe there was one who knew anything about Ireland who would traverse a single statement in it. Something, he admitted, might be said in explanation of many things, some things might be modified, but speaking as an Irish Minister responsible for one of the great Departments and speaking as an Irish Member who had given long and anxious consideration to the question, he stated that in his opinion the Resolution was substantially accurate and could not be doubted. Let them see how matters actually stood on the Estimates. There were two classes—the one productive expenditure and the other what he would call executive expenditure. He would take two great Departments and contrast them with two others. He would take his own Department first, and then he would take the Irish Land Commission, and contrast them with the Estimate for Law and Justice, and the House would see not only the difference, but the tremendous difficulty there was in dealing with this question. His Department was responsible for an expenditure of £400,000 per annum. £215,000 was on the Estimates, the remainder belonged to the endowment fund. But he should say that £149,000 of the Department Vote simply passed through its hands to other Departments. He would say that the charge for salaries and executive officers in connection with the Department was not over £65,000, although the total Vote on the Estimate was £215,000. But he claimed that the £400,000 was almost entirely productive and beneficial to the country. For instance, 750,000 head of cattle were annually shipped to Great Britain, and the large dealers who purchased these were unanimous in their testimony as to the great improvement of recent years that had been effected in Irish cattle. It was only reasonable to suppose that the improvement represented £1 per head. Anything less would not be noticeable. But if they put it at 10s. they had an increase of £375,000 per annum, at least three times the whole agricultural expenditure of the Department. Then what was the result of the agricultural instruction provided? There was now being carried out a most complete series of experiments in manuring and treatment of crops. Definite information was provided and widely disseminated to the farmers, who thereby know what and how to buy, what they were to pay, and how they were to use it. An enormous increase in the use of fertilisers was to be attributed directly to this work. Much had been made of the probable injury that would be done to the cattle trade of Ireland by the breaking up of the grass lands into small farms, but few people realised that the value of eggs, butter, and poultry, produced by small farmers, exceeded the total sum derived from the export of cattle—generally the business of large graziers. This was due directly to the county committee schemes and to the direct work of the Department in developing and improving. He claimed that that was almost entirely of a productive character, and that the charge of something like £60,000 for salaries, etc., was not a large sum and was not misspent. If the work of the Department was to go on, technical education to be extended, and county committees supported as they ought to be, it was more and not less money that would be required. The Land Commission was another of those Departments of the State which involved a heavy expenditure, close upon £300,000 this year. He had heard complaints of the enormous sums spent by the Commission upon all sorts of work. He asked was that fair? What was the Land Commission doing? It was very important to remember that the Land Commission was carrying out duties set by Parliament which involved practically resettling the whole country. It was changing the ownership of land throughout the whole of Ireland. Surely that was productive expenditure, and surely those were things which could not be done except in detail, which would require a great deal of time and a great deal of money. There was no doubt about it that the expenditure on these Departments was heavy and costly, but where that expenditure was useful and productive the House ought not to interfere, it ought to say that these Departments should be aided with money to carry on the work as quickly as it could be done. He came to a class of department of a very different kind, and he claimed the attention of the House to it because here it was that he thought real work could be done. He would take the Department of what was called Law and Justice. He summarised the Estimates, and found that the Supreme Court of Justice cost £103,446, and to that of course must be added about £76,000 for the salaries of Judges, which they could not discuss there; County Courts cost £110,475, pensions and salaries, £35,147, and resident magistrates £43,645. There they had an expenditure of £368,742 upon law and justice. Let them contrast that with Scotland, where the population was practically the same, although as far as criminal tendencies were concerned he should say that the great manufacturing centres such as were found in Lanarkshire would have a greater tendency towards crime than the agricultural districts of Ireland. What was the entire cost of Scottish law and justice? He took the Court of Session, the sheriff courts as representing the work of the Irish County Courts, and the entire cost in Scotland amounted to £202,608, or £150,000 less than law and justice cost in Ireland. He ventured to say with some experience of both countries that the law which the Scottish people got for their money was quite as sound, impartial, and pure as that which Ireland obtained. The only difference was that the Scottish paid £202,000 for their law and justice, whereas the Irish people paid £368,000, although the population was precisely the same. He thought something might be done in regard to that, though he admitted it was difficult to do it. For the present he contented himself with drawing the contrast. He took next the police. There was no counterpart for the Irish police in Scotland or in England. The Royal Irish Constabulary according to the Estimate cost £1,354,902, and to that must be added £96,632, the cost of the Metropolitan police, making a total of £1,451,534 for the police in Ireland. Hon. Gentlemen would not find in the Scottish Estimates a charge for the Scottish police, for this reason, that it was a local charge, and wa locally managed. But picking out the sums from the various accounts of the counties it was a strange thing to find that 4,500,000 Scottish people were policed at a charge of £600,000, but that it took £1,500,000 to do the same work in Ireland. It was enough to state a fact like that to show that something was radically wrong, and that the hon. Member for East Tyrone was right in making his complaint. £1,430,818 was spent on primary education in Ireland—less than the amount spent on police. That was intolerable. Education required more and not less. Under the present system under which it was spent there was probably great waste; there was certainly universal dissatisfaction, too many small schools, and inefficiency. What the House and the Government ought to feel was that those services which were productive should be helped and encouraged, whilst the others should have less expenditure made upon them. How was that to be done? Compared with Great Britain, Ireland was a poor country. She had not the natural resources of either Scotland or England. He was not making what was called in Ireland a "poor mouth," because he thought there were compensations. But they in Ireland had not the regulation of their own household. That was done for them, and all the expenditure was voted upon other people's ideas of what Ireland required. Ireland in a sense was a poor country forced to live beyond its means, and the result was inevitable. Why should the expenditure be upon such a gigantic scale? It was all because of a wasteful and wicked system of government. But let any

Chief Secretary venture upon a discovery. Let him say: "I shall not sanction £1,500,000 for police in a country which in ordinary times is practically crimeless; I shall not sanction £350,000 for what you call law and justice; I will not spend large sums of money in Ireland which have no counterpart in Scotland and England; I will bring the services of the country within reasonable limits." In that case what would happen? The Chief Secretary would not be able to do very much. The average life of a Chief Secretary was two years and three months. He had seen sixteen Chief Secretaries since he began to take a part in public affairs in Ireland. The Chief Secretary would be gone long before the officials let him do much. The right hon. Member for Dover was a splendid example. He went to Ireland with the very best of intentions—[A NATIONALIST MEMBER: They all do.]—and he proceeded to put them into force, and to reduce the police and resident magistrates, or at any rate, to make arrangements for doing so. But when he went he was succeeded by another who filled up the vacancies; and what was called the "garrison" loudly applauded him as they stepped into the vacant offices. So the thing went round and round like a horse in a bark mill. Something might occur in the west to give trouble, or what was called the rash might come out badly in the north; the police would then be overworked and the resident magistrates unable to cope with the trouble. There would then be others appointed "temporarily," but no man ever so appointed really believed he was appointed temporarily. Temporary men in six months applied to be made pensionable officers. It was perfectly impossible for any Chief Secretary, no matter what his intentions were, to make any impression upon this business from the English side of the water. He had been twenty-two years in the House, and the thing had gone on all that time because no Chief Secretary could deal with it. Officials had become a great class in Ireland; there were thousands of them, and their influence was felt everywhere. They were largely of one class, one creed, and one party—and if any man dared to lay hands upon what they considered their rights, that man was doomed. That sort of devil did not go out by prayer and fasting. It would not go out by fine intentions; it would have to be dealt with by Irishmen, on their own soil and in their own way. He had to point out to Englishmen another difficulty in this matter. Who had any interest in economy in Ireland? The revenue Ireland paid last year was £9,490,000; that was the sum taken out of the country in revenue. The expenditure in Ireland was £7,678,500, leaving a balance in favour of Ireland of £1,811,500. That was the Imperial contribution. Thus if Ireland reduced her expenditure the money so saved went to increase the Imperial contribution—Ireland got no benefit from such saving. That was a wicked system. No one in Ireland had any interest in economy. There was a perfect hopelessness of doing anything. No Chief Secretary could do anything because he was there to-day and gone to-morrow. There was no encouragement for economy in Ireland itself, because the people thought it was better to have money spent in Ireland than to save it to swell the Imperial contribution. Long study of this question had driven him to the conclusion that the whole thing was hopeless, and it was impossible for England to make any impression upon it. That was why he had supported the Irish Council Bill, because he thought it would give Irishmen themselves a grip upon expenditure in the great Departments. Until that was done by Irishmen in Ireland the remedy would never be effected.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I should not have intervened in this debate but for what has fallen from the hon. Gentleman. As an Irish Member I should like to see reductions of expenditure if they could be secured in Parliament. I should not have risen, as I said, if it had not been for the extraordinary speech to which we have listened from the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture. I am not going to say anything about the action of a Minister, a Member of the Government, who gets up and makes by inference and by suggestion, an attack on all those who have sat on that bench before, and pretends to make a straightforward declaration to the House as to the action of others, while he carefully, and for purposes of his own, ignores the action of the Government of which he is now a Member—misrepresents the action of myself when I was Chief Secretary, and makes a comparison between my right hon. friend the Member for Dover and myself, which, if it means anything, means that I departed from the arrangement at which my right hon. friend had arrived, and broke that promise which he had made to Parliament. I did nothing of the kind. The Vice-President says that my right hon. friend, amongst other economies, effected a reduction in the police, and he wound up by saying that no Irish Minister could make economies because he was not permitted. Having said that my right hon. friend had effected an economy by reducing the police, he charged me with having departed from that economy. It was convenient for him for the moment to forget—I do not think he has forgotten—that, whatever may have been my sins, I left the police at the statutory number. One of the earliest actions of the Government of which he himself is a Member, was to increase that number. Why? Because the hon. Gentleman tells us in his particularly picturesque language, that the "rash" had broken out in the west.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: No, no; in the north.

MR. WALTER LONG: Oh, in the north! But according to the statement made by the hon. Gentleman's own chief, the increase of the police was in consequence of troubles, not in the north, but in the west. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman cannot ride off on that. But now the hon. Gentleman in his changed position tells us about an outbreak of the rash. Is there a man in this House or out of it, who has been more eloquent or more frequent in his descriptions of disturbances and trouble in Ireland than the hon. Gentleman? Now that he finds it desirable to make peace with the National representatives of Ireland he forgets his speeches of the past, and says the increase of police is in consequence of an outbreak of rash.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The right hon. Gentleman must please remember that I stated that the trouble arose in the west, and the rash broke out in the north.

MR. WALTER LONG: The right hon. Gentleman also accused me of departing from my right hon. friend the Member for Dover's promise as to the resident magistrates. What about the Government of the right hon. Gentleman? Unless I am mistaken, a resident magistrate has been appointed since the Government came into office. I believe I am right in saying that the appointment that I made was to a resident magistrateship vacant within the conditions laid down by the right hon. Member for Dover, and I did not go beyond them. But what of this immaculate Government, who by their spokesmen accept every word uttered by the hon. Member who moved this Motion, and who have not a word to say in defence of those who held office before them, and who belonged to the same Party? Since they came into office they have done that which we deliberately declined to do. They have filled up a vacant judgeship, a much larger matter from the point of view of finance than the appointment of a resident magistrate or an increase of the police; and they did that in defiance of the fact that we had made this arrangement with Parliament. We introduced a Bill which was not passed, having for its object the reduction of the number of Judges, and we declined ourselves to make a new appointment, because we were debarred from doing so by the arrangement made with Parliament. Yet, in face of these facts, every one of which was known to the hon. Gentleman when he rose in order to score a petty party point, in order, if possible, to do some injury to a single individual, he chose to try and draw this distinction between my right hon. friend and myself, and he chose in doing that grossly to misrepresent the facts as to my administration in Ireland. Now, the hon. Gentleman accepted the whole of the Motion from below the gangway. It is perfectly true that there are some questions, however keenly we may be divided on party politics, or on great matters of controversy, upon which we may speak without reserve, and I hope that will ever be so in this House. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Motion did so in a speech of rare ability and great interest, and I do not hesitate to say that he made, as others have made before him, a clear case for making an examination into those allegations in regard to the cost of government in Ireland and in regard to the incidence of the cost as between the Imperial Exchequer and the Exchequer of Ireland alone. The hon. Member said that the Motion involved part of their Motion to be moved on Monday next, and he said quite distinctly that no promise of economy—no putting on of the white sheet as the hon. Gentleman opposite has done to-night, by disavowing the action of his predecessors as well as of his own Government—will satisfy them; nothing will satisfy them except the transference of power from this Government to another in Ireland. What was the answer to the hon. Gentleman? We thought he was going to leave that part of the Resolution untouched, but we were mistaken. The hon. Gentleman has never tired telling the House and Ireland that, although he has seen fit to join another Party, and has left the Party with which he had worked so long, it did not mean that he was identified in any way with the cause of Home Rule. Can he say that after the declaration he has made here to-night? Has he offered the smallest opposition to the explicit and definite declaration of the hon. Gentleman below the gangway, representing as he does the views he and his Party have always held? What interpretation does his language bear? If it does not mean that these matters are to be transferred to an Irish Parliament it has no meaning at all. Therefore, all these assertions and declarations which we have heard in this House and in Ireland, have been entirely obliterated by the definite statement made now, and we know he is prepared no longer to resist that great fundamental change in the government of Ireland which he resisted so long, and to which many of us believed he was not yet converted, although he had seen fit to join the present Government. It is not possible now to discuss the larger question opened up by the Motion and in a lesser degree by the hon. Gentleman; but I confess I regret very much that the Government has thought it necessary to put up to represent them on this occasion a Minister who has embittered what has been a non-controversial debate—a debate extremely interesting and in which any hon. Member could have taken part irrespective of the part he takes in public affairs, short only of the change from Imperial to Irish control, without embarking upon any of those personal attacks which the hon. Gentleman has thought it necessary to make in order to establish his case. I should not have risen if it had not been for the charges made by the hon. Gentleman, charges for which there is not a shadow of foundation, and charges which as a Member of the Government he ought not to have made, because he is in possession of the information I have now given to the House. I profoundly regret that we should have witnessed this spectacle of a Minister who, in his desire to join hands with those who support his Government, thinks it necessary to traduce those who are opposed to him, and who differ from him, not only in politics, but also in this, that they are consistent, whereas he is remarkable for his inconsistency.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said, in regard to the Motion so ably laid before the House by his hon. friend, there was no excuse for a Member of the Front Bench saying that they could find no way to reduce the expenditure, and it was equally futile for the hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken to use the *tu quoque* argument, and say: "If we are fat, you are also." The right hon. Gentleman would excuse him if he said that he ought not to be excited by any burning desire for retrenchment in Ireland, seeing that he represented a constituency near Dublin Castle, called "Dublin Castle by the Sea," because in that constituency the voters were very largely composed of those who were intimately concerned in the perpetuation of the system of extravagance and corruption which had been so strongly denounced that afternoon. The main argument used on the other side was this: "We grant that large sums of money are raised in Ireland, we grant that government in Ireland is costly, we grant that Ireland in proportion to her taxable capacity is overtaxed, but we have to set-off against that the extraordinary amount of money that is spent in Ireland. Look what a large amount of money is spent on law, justice, police, Local Government Boards, and all the other great Departments with which you are blessed in Ireland." But that was a very strange argument to use, that over-taxation was compensated for by extravagant expenditure. The extraordinary anomaly was that the more Ireland was taxed the less money went to the tax gatherer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that that was due to the extravagant cost of Civil government in Ireland. He would give a few figures to the House in corroboration of that view. He would take five periods—1819, when the Exchequers were amalgamated, and then the periods of twenty years, 1849 to 1869–70, then 1889–90, and the present financial year. The estimated true revenue of Ireland in 1829 was £5,264,000. The percentage of Ireland's revenue to that of Great Britain was 10·4, and the contribution per head was 15s. 5d. In 1849 after the disastrous famine the estimated true revenue was £4,867,000, the percentage 9·4, and the amount per head 14s. 9d. Twenty years later the revenue, still rising, was £7,426,000, the percentage 10·7, and the cost per head £1 7s. 9d. In 1889–1890 the amount raised was £7,734,000, the percentage 9·1, and the amount per head £1 12s. 6d.; and in the last financial year for which they had figures, 1906–1907, the amount raised was £9,490,000, the percentage 6·8, and the amount per head £2 3s. 3d. Ireland's contribution had doubled in the past sixty years. To take the figures as given a few months ago by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in reply to a question by his hon. friend who had moved the Motion, the increase of the tax revenue within the past ten years had been from £7,144,000 to £8,274,000 or £1,130,000, and the percentage had fallen from 7·9 to 6·9, compared with Great Britain. The obvious conclusion was that the more Ireland paid in tax revenue the less the injustice of over-taxation, because of the inflated expenditure of Great Britain, and the more she paid in taxation the less she contributed to Imperial expenditure, because of the cost of Irish services. In other words the candle was being burnt at both ends. Ireland was paying more year after year, owing to the demands made upon her, and to the increase in British expenditure, but owing to the still greater increase of the costly system of administration in Ireland, that was more than counterbalanced by the increase in the expenditure, and while Ireland paid more and more as the years rolled by she contributed less and less towards the Imperial expenditure of the country. That had a double disadvantage. Ireland was expending more and getting less in return. It might be said that a good deal of this increase was automatic, but this thing must be tackled in a radical manner and little peddling reforms here and there would do little. In order to tackle it in a proper way they must tackle the system which gave rise to these gross abuses and extraordinary anomalies. Lord Farrer and his colleagues on the Financial Relations Commission acknowledged this, and said—

> "We are of opinion that the excessive expenditure of Ireland which we have described, although it may be no justification for the excessive taxation of Ireland, is at once a pecuniary loss to the taxpayers of Great Britain and the cause of demoralisation to Ireland."

Even the Tory Government in 1906, which did not accept the findings of the Commission, proposed to appoint a fresh Commission, and in the reference to it acknowledged that there was a very strong case made out. The Commission was to inquire how the expenditure on Irish local services for which the State wholly, or in part, provided compared with corresponding expenditure in England and Scotland, and whether such expenditure might with advantage be adjusted or reduced. With regard to the very important point whether the injustice of over-taxing Ireland was compensated for by expending extravagant sums on administration by keeping up these over-manned and over-salaried offices, let him quote a very distinguished member of the Conservative Party.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present. House counted, and forty Members being found present,

MR. FLYNN, continuing, said he was endeavouring to prove the cruelty of the position and that by the system of undiscerning and indiscriminate taxation—by what was called identical taxation—they forced Ireland to bear taxation upon the same basis as England, altogether ignoring the fact that Ireland's proportion of indirect taxation was 50 per cent. as compared with about 23 per cent. or 24 per cent. for Great Britain. The mischief was twofold. In the first place over-taxed Ireland received a very much larger amount of money than would be required under normal circumstances, and they had to levy increased taxes year after year to meet increased military and naval expenditure. Even when military exigencies were over and they came to times of peace the taxation had to be retained at a high level, and by the system of identical taxation taxation was forced up year after year and decade after decade. But simultaneously with that there went on this automatic increase in the cost of Irish establishments, Ireland losing all the time and the Imperial Treasury gaining nothing as far as they were concerned, because the percentage of Ireland's revenue to that of Great Britain had fallen from 9·4 sixty years ago to 6·8. With regard to the argument of excessive expenditure with which this Motion dealt he was about to quote Sir Edward Clarke, who, speaking on a Motion on the broader question of the general financial relations, said—

> "They tried to spend the taxation as if it did not matter how large was the tax imposed, so long as they spent it upon the population where it was raised. According to that theory they would be doing Ireland, in her poverty and trouble, no harm at all, if they were to impose £3,000,000 more taxation per annum upon her, always provided they doubled the number of her polic, gave her more Judges, and for the special benefit of the landlords, an army of assistant Commissioners."

It was quite obvious that if this system of extravagance in administration was to be held as justification for over-taxation it did not matter what they drew for Ireland. It did not matter how the taxation was increased, either direct or indirect, if they handed it back in this form. All they had to do was to double the number of police, put some more Judges there, and fill up more Dublin Castle appointments, and, hey presto! the thing was done to the satisfaction of everybody except Ireland, certainly to the satisfaction of the Treasury. But the real tragedy as regarded Ireland was that such a large proportion of the expenditure should be of an unproductive kind, or worse than unproductive if he could find an adjective to describe it, compared with the productive portion. Was it not something tragic after 100 years of the Union, in the twentieth century, to find this large amount for law, for police and for Judges, though the Judges' salaries were charged on the Consolidated Fund? In the matter of book-keeping they were entitled to bring in everything which was put down by the Treasury as a separate Irish service. It was an intolerable state of things to find that half the available revenue was devoted to unproductive services. There was no more painful thing than the average Irish Member having to approach successive Chief Secretaries or Secretaries to the Treasury or Chancellors of the Exchequer, either by deputation in Dublin or at that House or across the floor to get better terms and conditions for the educational needs of the country, for the development of agriculture, and for the building up and improvement of those industries which were largely crushed out by the bigotry of Parliaments that had preceded this; and there was nothing more humiliating than to have to come to the House and ask for what was after all their own money that was being spent on that corrupt and extravagant administration. He knew no better trial than that which Irish Members experienced when during the recess they attended congresses of the national teachers and other bodies in Ireland, all of whom cried out for better conditions and pointed out the niggardly manner in which the country was treated by the Treasury. Yet the average Irish Member was powerless in the matter except to complain of the wretched system of finance. He admitted that the Congested Districts Board had received in the past considerable sums of money, but all that was as a drop in the ocean compared with the amount of beneficial work they could have done had they had more money. But the operations of that Board had been sharply and suddenly brought to a standstill. The Chief Secretary had told them that the reason was want of money. The only Department in which there seemed to be no lack of money was that which dealt with those things which were unproductive and did nothing whatever towards developing the intellect or improving the moral and material resources of the nation. He noted the absence of the Ulster Members from the debate. It was very sad to think that there was only one branch of Irish subjects which seemed to interest them, and that was the police news of the country. The *Police Gazette* was the only class of literature they seemed to study. The subject the House was now discussing was absolutely non-controversial, or should at any rate be so, and it was non-political. Ten years ago the Ulster Members under the leadership of Colonel Saunderson, joined with the Nationalist representatives in making a strong representation with regard to the financial relations between the two countries. Times were changed, but matters had not improved. The duty of the Irish representatives was clear; they must keep on protesting against the excessive cost of administration of which the Motion complained. He had heard it suggested that changes which might be made in the Irish police would increase the Constabulary Vote. He would resist strenuously, as he hoped the Nationalist Party would, any idea of increasing the cost of administration of the Irish police. Not that they were overpaid, but if there was to be a revision it should be a revision that embodied common-sense as well as economy, and should be brought about by revising the salaries of the higher officers and the large establishment charges rather than by increasing the sum total of the Vote. The figures the hon. Member for East Tyrone had given contrasting Scotland and Ireland were most striking, and if he had had time to contrast the charges with those for law and police in Belgium and Germany he would have found that they proved that the Irish system was the most costly in any civilised country. Nay, he would not be surprised if it was found that the whole Russian autocracy, with its utter disregard for the people was carried on much more cheaply and much more to the satisfaction of the people. The Irish Members would never accept the uneconomic, vicious doctrine that they counterbalanced and gave an equivalent to what Ireland claimed to be the gross over-taxation of the country by an extravagant system of administration, which was ruinous to the country, developed none of its best interests, and produced very little good to the Imperial Treasury.

*Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) repudiated the idea that the present Ulster Members had gone back on the views held by the Ulster Members ten years ago. With regard to the contrast drawn between Ireland and Scotland, the heavy expense in Ireland had arisen largely from the operations of the United Irish League so far as the administration of the police was concerned. In Ireland the United Irish League ruled in opposition to the King's Law in several counties. [Cries of "No"]. In Scotland if the League still had a few branches, it did not dare to usurp the law and hold its Courts and execute punishments. Under those circumstances it was little wonder that Scotland had been able to have an effective police force at much less cost. He was pleased to hear the hon. Member for East Tyrone say when referring to the Agriculture and Technical Instruction Department, that there was no extravagance there, and that he would gladly see another £500,000 or even £1,000,000 devoted to the beneficent work of that Department. The Member for South Tyrone had also spoken of the value of the work of the Agricultural and Technical Instruction Department. But what was the attitude of Nationalist leaders to that Department? They found the hon. and learned Member for Waterford describing the Department as an insidious attempt to divert the friends of Ireland from the Nationalist movement, while the Member for East Mayo said that the Department was from top to bottom a machine to burst up and destroy the Nationalist movement.

For himself, he endorsed what the Vice President had said of his own Department, and was glad that its work was increasingly valued in Ireland, and that last year the amount raised by voluntary taxation to secure the grants from the Department was almost £60,000. That sum, coming from every county in Ireland, showed how much out of sympathy with the Nationalist Leaders' views on the matter the people of Ireland were. The Member for East Tyrone had referred to the income-tax figures in Ireland as showing no expansion, but he suggested that there was a simple explanation of that. Since the present Government came into power investors preferred to make their investments out of Ireland rather than in it. On the eve of the previous Home Rule Bill there was a very sharp shrinkage in all Irish securities, and again during the past two years a similar shrinkage had occurred. Investors as a rule were sagacious and prudent people; and they could hardly be blamed if under present circumstances they preferred to invest their money on this side of St. George's Channel. The Member for East Tyrone had said that there was a time coming when Ireland would be run at a loss to the Empire. He did not share in that prophecy, because in spite of the strong influence of the League Ireland was making progress. The increase in the amount of deposits in the Savings Banks from £5,000,000 in 1886 to £13,000,000 in 1906 was satisfactory, and so were the figures with regard to the growing resources of railways, and the amount of goods carried by them. These facts he thought disposed of the suggestion that Ireland was being trodden down by the pressure of taxation. It had been admitted even by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that if in the last ten years taxation had risen by £2,000,000 the various grants-in-aid had been swollen by almost exactly the same figure, so that, without expressing an opinion on the position as it was ten years ago, at any rate they could console themselves with the reflection that it was not worse now than ten years ago. He was sorry that the Vice-President of the Agricultural Department had introduced a bitter and controversial element into the matter, because he saw no reason why there should be political controversy in introducing a reasonable and moderate reform of Irish Departments, if real economy would result. The hon. Member's speech seemed to mark another milestone on his way to a seat on the Nationalist benches. He was surprised that, considering the hon. Member's experience, and his recent transfer from one Party to another, he should have endeavoured to make political capital by an attack on Unionists in this matter. It was altogether gratuitous and uncalled for, and not what they had a right to expect from the Government Front Bench. The Vice-President had said he would be glad to have more money for his Department, and it was worth all it was costing. He was not disposed to differ, but it was clear there was no saving to be expected there. As to primary education they all agreed it was inefficient, that there were too many schools, and that teachers were not remunerated as they should be. The Government were full of compassion and sympathy, though they would only promise the disappointing new grant of £40,000 a year for three years. There again there was no hope of reduction. It came to this, that in three out of the four Departments which had been enlarged upon in the debate it was admitted on all sides of the House that no radical economy could be expected. On the contrary, more money was called for, and the only item which looked large to the average Englishman and Scotsman was the cost of the Judges, stipendiaries, and police. Let it not be forgotten that the present Government added to the Judicial Bench in violation of an understanding existing in the last Parliament. The Vice-President of the Agricultural Department had told them that there were thousands of officials in Ireland, and thousands of suppliants more for office.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I know that.

*MR. BARRIE said he understood that from South Tyrone there had been a steady procession of eligible men to Dublin trying to emphasise and bring home their claims.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): There are a few from North Derry if you only knew it.

*MR. BARRIE said the supporters of the Vice-President in North Derry were not very numerous, but there too each and all of them considered that they were highly qualified for every well-paid office and every honour of a more or less high degree. He could only say that many expectations had been disappointed both in South Tyrone and possibly in North Derry. But that was not the point. What he wanted to emphasise was that where they had a system of this kind they would always have plenty of applicants who considered their qualifications were up to the mark. He did not think the hon. Member for South Tyrone was at all backward in that little weakness himself. He only wished he could join with hon. Members below the gangway in saying that the present time was opportune for attempting a reduction in the cost of preserving law and order in Ireland, but there was not an honest man sitting even on the Radical Benches who could say that the time was ripe for doing that. So far as other and less controversial matters were concerned, however, he would heartily join his friends below the gangway, and he thought he could also speak for his colleagues, in any arrangement which would make for economy in the public services. He hoped the time would come—it was not likely to come immediately in view of the forthcoming debate whose shadow was over the House—when all Irish representatives in the House might be able to gather at a round table conference and consider what substantial economies might be effected with great benefit to all concerned.

MR. MOONEY (Newry) said he had listened with great pleasure to the speech of the hon. Gentleman as he had done on many former occasions. He was glad to hear the hon. Gentleman acknowledge himself in his true colours as an Irish-Scotsman, but he did not think they could get much light from a distinguished Scotsman on the conduct of Irish affairs. The right hon. Gentleman who sat for South Dublin had accused the hon. Member who represented the Agricultural Department of apostasy, and with importing into the debate a party spirit. The hon. Member for North Londonderry had also lamented that a tone of party had been imported into the discussion. He would have been very glad to join with the right hon. Member for South Dublin, and the distinguished Scotsman from North Derry, if this had not been made a party question; but a party meeting of the colleagues of those hon. Members had been held last week, and it was then decided that the Resolution before the House should be considered in a party spirit, and that the Orange Members would have no part or lot in the Resolution, which they declared was only a means to an end, and must be opposed. Hon. Gentlemen above the gangway must have very short memories, therefore, about what had passed at their own meeting when they charged the hon. Member for South Tyrone with giving a party tone to the debate.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): There was no such resolution passed.

MR. MOONEY said he would accept the hon. Gentleman's disclaimer so far as the hon. Gentleman was personally concerned; but the hon. Member had been misled, because the organ which officially published all the discussions which took place at the meetings of the Irish Unionists, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, gave chapter and verse for what had taken place at this particular meeting, and the resolution which had been passed at it; and no contradiction of that report had yet appeared in the same or any other journal. He thought that on a question like that before the House the hon. Gentleman might have found time, when not trying to trace bogus outrages in Ireland, to read the paper. If he had done so he would not have said that no such resolution had been passed. The Vice-President of the Agricultural Department had, he thought, made a most interesting and courageous speech when he talked about the Imperial contributions of Ireland to England. For himself, he spoke as one of those who would gladly see the cost of government in Ireland go on and on until the Imperial contribution went down to an even lower rate than it was to-day; because if they were to make immediate savings in any great spending department in Ireland, the result would not be for the benefit of the taxpayer in Ireland, but would add to the contributions to the British Treasury. Everyone knew that the Imperial Exchequer derived more in proportion from the Irish taxpayer than from the taxpayers of either England or Scotland. He remembered that in the last Parliament when the right hon. Member for Dover proposed that the money which might be saved in certain departments in Ireland should be put to a fund for the benefit of Ireland, the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, with that eloquence which they were accustomed to hear from him, said that that would be scandalous, and that the savings should be handed on to the British Treasury. He did not think that the hon. Member for South Tyrone was entirely free in this respect in regard to the department over which he presided. An Act was passed providing that the balance of any grant which might be made by Parliament for the use of his Department, unexpended at the end of the financial year, should not be sent to the British Treasury, but should be earmarked for the benefit of Ireland. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor interpreted that Act in another way, and instead of the grant being an advantage to Ireland, it had been a disadvantage. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor seized the opportunity of starving the industries which ought to have been encouraged by the grant, broke the promises given by the Department, and accumulated a fund which he held was absolutely illegal and had never been contemplated by the House. The hon. Gentleman's predecessor in order to induce the urban authorities in Ireland to start a system of technical education promised that if they would make a rate for that purpose, he would out of the funds of the Department make an equivalent grant to the amount raised by the urban authorities. All over Ireland the urban authorities embarked on an expenditure for technical education and struck a rate. The first year the grant was made to the urban authorities towards the cost of erecting technical schools, but in the following year, after the urban authorities had again struck a rate and applied for the equivalent grant out of the monies voted by this House, the hon. Gentleman's predecessor said: "Oh no; we won't give you the money this year for technical education; we require it for something else."

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said he thought his hon. friend was mistaken. The grant for technical education was £55,000, and that sum was distributed amongst the urban authorities; and it was so distributed now.

Mr. MOONEY said that the hon. Gentleman's predecessor sent round to the local authorities in Ireland a circular in which he said that the technical education committees must manage to do without the grant that year as he was not in a position to help him; although he had formerly promised that if the local authorities established a rate for technical education he would give them an equivalent grant.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Up to the amount sanctioned by Parliament

Mr. MOONEY said he did not think that that was mentioned in the circular. In numberless cases the urban authorities did strike a rate, and the first year they did get an equivalent grant from the Department; but in the next year, after having again struck the rate and entered into contracts which they could not break, they were told that they could not get the money, which went to a special fund amounting to £500,000.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said that that was not so. During the first two years it was found impossible to spend all the money which Parliament had voted, and the sums so accumulated were put together and constituted a reserve fund.

Mr. MOONEY said that no doubt the hon. Gentleman had more knowledge of the working of the Department than he had, but he did not think he was right on the question of fact, because week after week, and day after day, he questioned Mr. Pryce on this subject, and that right hon. Gentleman had to admit that there was a great discrepancy between the figures supplied to him and the figures published in the official Return. The answers of

Mr. Bryce went to show that there was now being built up, under a system which had no legal sanction, a reserve fund for the Department which was never contemplated by the House. The hon. Gentleman talked about savings upon the Judiciary, the Land Commission, and other Departments, but he was not going to support savings unless they went into Irish funds and not into Imperial funds. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin had made a vehement attack upon the hon. Member for South Tyrone with regard to the charge the latter made against him as to the filling up of vacancies in the Judiciary. He was not concerned to defend the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who was quite able to do that for himself, but if anybody turned up the list of appointments made during the *regime* of the right hon. Gentleman they would see that every single statement made by the hon. Member for South Tyrone was accurate. He could only attribute the heat which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin brought into the debate to the fact that he had had so many tariff reform figures in his head, which were curious figures, that he absolutely forgot the figures in regard to the persons he had appointed during the time he was Chief Secretary for Ireland. He thought it was a curious point that, upon a question which the hon. Member for Derry said united Ireland, there were only two stalwart representatives of Ulster present. If it had been a question of whether Lord Ashtown had been amply compensated for the alleged outrage which took place at his lodge, the whole of the Party would have been present. He thought very little of a Party which, thinking that something advantageous was proposed which they ought to support, failed to support it, because some individual made a speech which upset their dignity, as he supposed he ought to say, but he did not like using such a word as applied to the Ulster Unionist Party.

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said the resolution before the House expressed the opinion that the cost of administration in Ireland was excessive, and that reduction would result if it were subject to Irish control, which meant Nationalist control. He quite admitted that there were a great many points in the administration of Ireland which were very costly. To begin with, there was one item due to the multiplicity of officials, because of the large number of exceptional Acts which applied to Ireland, such as Land Acts, Land Purchase Acts, Labourers Dwellings Acts, and Congested Districts legislation, all of which were worked by a large number of officials, with such an amount of overlapping as must cost a considerable amount of money. He might point out that the greater part of this expenditure, especially under the Land Acts, was borne by taxation, of which England paid a very large share, whereas with the cost of the English Land Acts the whole expenditure was paid by Englishmen through rates. The Land Purchase Act, which was going to cost £112,000,000, would be paid as to eight-tenths of it by Englishmen. [Cries of "No."]

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that was just the difficulty that Irishmen had to meet in the House, but he had pointed out that the gross revenue paid by Ireland last year was £9,000,000, and the gross expenditure in Ireland about £7,000,000, and that, in fact, after paying every penny of expenditure out of Irish taxation, the result was that £1,800,000 went for Imperial purposes. Therefore, it was wrong to say that England paid anything of the kind, as far as administration was concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER: But what about the Army and Navy?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: That is Imperial contribution.

*MR. J. F. MASON: The point I made was as regards the Land Purchase Act, which is going to cost £112,000,000.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Then the hon. Member is out of order, because it is administration that we are discussing now.

*MR. J. F. MASON said he was stating that that was the expenditure which fell upon them under the Act, and he said that it fell very largely upon English shoulders. [NATIONALIST Cries of "No."] The Vice-President of the Irish Board of Agriculture had proceeded to say that law and justice cost more in Ireland than in Scotland, with a more or less identical population. That was so, but, after all, the large expenditure on police in Ireland, as compared with Scotland, was to a great extent due to the agrarian movement and to the difficulty of protecting a large number of people in their ordinary avocations. A great number of the police were at this moment engaged in protecting men whose lives were not otherwise safe. Not only so; but the Nationalist Members themselves were in need of being protected by the police. The Leader of the Nationalist Party himself last September was protected by the police when he went to the Mansion House, and the Lord Mayor of Dublin called in thirty policemen to keep order in the assembly. After all, too, there was a *per contra* in regard to the support which Ireland received from the United Kingdom. In thirty years Ireland had had £135,000,000 of money from the British Exchequer. What would have been the position if Ireland had had to raise that money from her own resources? Would they have been able to raise that money as cheaply as they could with British security? Had not British security been a valuable asset to Ireland in the past? He said that the Union had saved Ireland far more money than it had ever cost her. After all, however, there were opportunities for economy in the administration of Irish affairs, and he ventured to think that if there were more firmness in the executive and the Government were less squeezable by hon. Members below the gangway, there would be less uncertainty and turbulence, and great saving might be effected. That uncertainty in Ireland cost a large amount of money, not only for the police, but for the disturbance of the trade and industry of the country. Trade and industry would thrive if there were more certainty in the application of the law. The Irish people had done a good deal to endanger their most useful trades, those of agriculture and cattle raising, and he thought that the root cause of the difficulty in administering Irish affairs was that Ireland was now governed by a Ministry, many members of which did not believe in the system they were called upon to administer; they did not believe in the Union, or only half believed in it, and the consequence was that there was an amount of indecision and vacillation which accounted for much of the expenditure of the country. But were there prospects of more economy under a Nationalist rule than there were under the present rule? He thought they might get an object lesson from the way in which economy was displayed by the Nationalist municipality of Dublin. The *Sinn Fein* of 14th March, 1908, said—

> "On a city, one-fourth of whose population suffer from acute distress each winter, £7,600 a year has been levied by the Bill-promoters and their allies, for a dozen years past, and £2,000 a year added to the salaries of overpaid officials, under whose administration the debt of the City has risen to £2,750,000, and the rates stand at over 10s. in the £, paralysing industry, and thus throwing men and women out of employment and into the workhouse. Of that 10s. in the £ levied on the direct ratepayer by the Corporation, and levied in rent, on the indirect ratepayer, only 1s. 6d. is now available for the upkeep of the City. The remainder goes to pay the interest on the enormous debt which burdens the City, to pay for the pauperism which the debt largely causes, to pay for a police force over which the citizens are denied any control, and to pay salaries to officials at a rate which wealthy England does not pay. The town clerk of Dublin, a City of 300,000 people, draws a salary of £2,100 a year. The clerk of the London County Council, governing an area with 6,000,000 people, has a salary of £2,000 a year. If he were paid at the rate the town clerk of Dublin is paid, his salary would approach £50,000 a year."

That was the sort of economy they would have to look for if Ireland were governed by the Nationalist Party.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said that his hon. friend had been taunted with being a Scotsman sitting for an Irish constituency. If the hon. Member for Newry was an average Irishman it would be an excellent thing for the House if there were a few more Scotsmen representing Ulster. The Vice-President of the Agricultural Department of Ireland had introduced into the debate a very violent and bitter tone. He had succeeded a man absolutely single-minded in his Department: a man who shut out politics from it altogether and who had never shown that bitter and controversial spirit in the debates. The hon. Member had said that the cost of police in Scotland was £500,000 and that in Ireland it was three times as great. Then he had asked in tragic tones "What does it mean." He remembered an occasion when the hon. Gentleman, who then professed a different political faith, was saved from an attack by an angry mob and knew the need for effective police and stringent administration of the law in Ireland. The hon. Member had made a rather hopeless and despairing speech declaring that before any hope for Ireland was reached Chief Secretaries would come and go. He gave his right hon. friend a year and a half to remain, and he then said he would leave the country without having solved these questions. Of one thing they might be quite certain—that whatever happened the hon. Gentleman would not depart. Whatever Party was in power they would always find him on the Treasury bench drawing the emoluments. The hon. Member had taunted Ulster Members with not being present at the debate, but Ulster Members he ventured to say did more without being paid for it than the hon. Member had ever done. When a short time ago a Committee was ordered the hon. Member himself was one of the absentees and did not come into the House. The taunt which he threw out was not deserved by the Members of the Ulster Party.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) said there were two points in one of the speeches made from above the gangway which struck him as confuting each other in their argument. The hon. Member for North Derry had spoken of the want of confidence of the people of Ireland and their investing their savings in this country rather than their own, and he had taunted the the Nationalist Members with the fact that the Irish people were investing their money on this side of the Channel and not in Ireland. In the next breath, the hon. Member had declared that the deposits in the Savings Banks and Joint Stock Banks were millions more than they were ten years ago. That completely refuted the argument that there was any lack of confidence among the people of Ireland, and proved conclusively that under this or any other Government the people of Ireland knew their own business and attended to it, and that they were not losing prosperity as was alleged to be the case in consequence of the agitation now going on in the country. He rose principally to call attention to the cost of primary education in Ireland. Figures and tables had been read to show the amounts expended upon the police, law charges, and other expenses of Civil administration in Ireland. It was a most extraordinary thing that the amount spent on police was almost equal to that spent on education. The hon. Member for North Derry had referred to the speeches made by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, and the hon. Member for East Mayo, commenting adversely on the work done by the technical instruction department, had suggested that as public bodies were working the scheme of technical education those hon. Members did not represent the views of Ireland in their speeches. The work itself might be such as to commend itself to the people of the country, but so far the operations of the Department in Ireland had been disappointing, and there was much to be done. The Vice-President of that Department had his work cut out to undo the mischief which had been done by his predecessors in Ireland. The country people of Ireland had no confidence whatever in the work of the Department—neither as to the ability nor as to the scheme—which had done nothing permanent for the benefit of the people. The hon. Gentleman had spoken of a reserve fund of £340,000. There should be no reserve fund, there was plenty of scope for the work.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I am engaged in dissipating it.

MR. J. P. FARRELL said that the charges of the hon. Member for North Derry therefore fell to the ground so far as Ireland was concerned. In his opinion the best thing the Government could do would be largely to increase the Estimates for primary education in Ireland, and to turn the minds of the teachers in Ireland to the imparting of better knowledge to the people. Forestry, gardening, and agriculture should be as much matters to be imparted by the teachers as the lengths of rivers and names of foreign countries which these people were never likely to see. In that way primary education might be made useful to Ireland.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) said he rose in the hope of eliciting something from the Treasury bench that might obviate the extravagant expenditure in Ireland. He did not wish to import party feeling into the debate, because it was a matter of too much importance to be discussed as a party question. Everybody would agree that it was desirable to put a stop to the present extravagant and lavish expenditure in Ireland. He agreed up to a certain point with the mover of the Motion, but he had to take a divergent opinion with regard to the latter portion of his speech, because the hon. Member maintained that Home Rule was the only remedy by which the difficulty would be entirely removed. When the hon. Member for North Tyrone made his speech, however, he endeavoured wherever he could to raise all that political animosity which Unionist Members had striven to allay. Instead of endeavouring to suggest anything that might be done, the hon. Member had said he looked on the matter as absolutely hopeless, and hurled recriminations at his predecessors. They had heard that the Motion was an argument for Home Rule, but he was convinced that it was the strongest argument against it, because when the government of Ireland was handed over to the people of Ireland, if ever it was, it should be handed over as a going concern and not in the condition in which as he understood it was at the present time. With regard to economy he was in entire agreement with the mover of the Motion. As to the second part of the Motion, which stated that the expenditure was not distributed in such a way as to promote national well-being, he regretted that he could not express himself as in agreement with it, because although it was true that the money was voted by Parliament, the Estimates were proposed by Irishmen, the money was apportioned by Irishmen, and what was more the work which was paid for by this money was done by Irishmen. The hon. Gentleman who proposed the Motion complained that too much money was spent. After all, the people who benefited by the expenditure were the Irish. He maintained that it was the duty of any Government in power, where money was too lavishly spent in Ireland, to suggest some plan, or do something, to redress the wrong. But until now the only solution put forward had been that mentioned by the mover of the Resolution, namely, that if there were Home Rule in Ireland all these difficulties and evils would disappear. With regard to the question of taxation, it was true that it had increased in Ireland, but it was equally true that it had increased everywhere else. He thought that they must all admit that taxation would go on increasing instead of decreasing, but they must also take into consideration the wealth of the country, which had also increased. The railway receipts had increased by something like 25 per cent., and deposits in joint stock and savings banks had increased to a very large extent. It was obvious, if taxation had increased, as they knew perfectly well it had, and would increase in the future, that they should set off, on the other side, the wealth of the country, which had increased constantly in proportion to the taxation to be borne. In reference to the decrease of population referred to by the hon. Member below the gangway, and so constantly lamented, he was one of those who believed that at the present moment Ireland was overpopulated. ["Oh."] He regretted it very much, but he did not think that Ireland was at present in a condition to maintain a larger population than it had now. He was very sorry for it. But the population which had disappeared from Ireland was not to a great extent the population which they could look to as contributors to the Exchequer; it was rather the population which would have been more or less a charge on the Exchequer, and that would have been a disadvantage to the country. From the various speeches which they had heard one would imagine that England had been the gainer by that. He could not see that argument at all. It was a long time since England could be looked upon in any sense as having injured Ireland. He entirely agreed that in years gone by the policy of England was not calculated to do Ireland any good; in fact, it did Ireland a very great deal of harm. But since those days England had certainly wiped out any deficiency in that respect, and all that had been done by England in the recent past had been for the benefit of Ireland. When they looked to the large sums of money advanced, with the credit of England at the back of it, he for one could not understand why hon. Gentlemen were so anxious to have everything in their own hands, because it meant that once they established Home Rule in Ireland that credit, from which they extracted so much benefit at the present moment, would be gone for ever. There was also the question of primary education, on which the expenditure was certainly extravagant and of an unjustifiable character. By extravagant he meant that the number of schools in Ireland was far greater for a smaller number of children, than was the case in Scotland. It seemed extraordinary that when there was lack of efficiency in primary education, they should hear so much clamour on all sides for secondary education in Ireland. One of the solutions, besides the redistribution of money which the hon. Member proposed, was that the Royal Irish Constabulary should be reduced, and it was pointed out, in support of that proposal, that there was less crime in Ireland. It was perfectly true that there was less crime in Ireland, but he did not suppose that he would be entirely wrong if he drew from that the analogy that the less crime in Ireland was in proportion to the large force of Irish Constabulary maintained. He, however, did not want to draw that analogy at all. But they must remember that the Royal Irish Constabulary were also employed as excise officers, and it was also, perhaps, a very curious coincidence that the force had been increased in numbers by the present executive. He did not believe in the conclusion at which the mover of the Resolution had arrived, that the removal of all the difficulties of which they complained would be effected by the granting of Home Rule. He did not believe that that would prove a solution in any sense; but he did think that if the Government set themselves to discover—and he appealed to them to do so—how it was that a great deal of the money was allocated in an extravagant and useless manner, they would be able to remedy the present state of affairs in Ireland by causing it to be expended in a manner advantageous to that country.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said the speech of the noble Lord was a speech which filled countrymen of his with curiously mingled feelings. There were parts of it which showed a certain amount of sympathy and natural feeling, and others which betrayed a state of invincible ignorance. They had heard from the hon. Member for East Tyrone as powerful an indictment of British government in Ireland as had ever been uttered in that House. Out of many passages he singled one which attracted his attention and moved his feelings. It was the passage which the hon. Member quoted from the Education Inspector's Report, which described a school in the north of Ireland, he believed in Belfast, where there was rather less air space than in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Yet, in face of that, the noble Lord said that the chief fault of the primary education system in Ireland was its extravagance. That was the first example of invincible ignorance. He did not know anything more tragic in history than the emigration from Ireland. With a population reduced by one-half in half a century, with all the misery and suffering which exile meant to an Irishman, the noble Lord got up and said the work had not been sufficiently completed, and that Ireland was not yet sufficiently empty. He was like the famous divine, who said that Ireland was a delightful country except for its people. It made him sad to think that a young Irishman, who might be serving his country—he would not say like his ancestors, because that might be treading on delicate ground—could only say that the remedy he had to offer was the further depletion of a population which already in half a century had been diminished by one-half. The noble Lord had said also that the Estimates were made by Irishmen, spent by Irishmen, and, he suggested, voted by Irishmen. Let him look at the House. Who, if the Motion were divided upon, would vote on the question of the expenditure in Ireland? Was it the Irishmen, was it even the Englishmen who had listened to the debate? No; the division lobbies would be crowded by a majority of Englishmen who had not listened to a single word of the speeches. He must express his profound regret that more English Members were not present at the debate. He did not want to complain on that point, but as Englishmen were, in the main, the people responsible for the government of Ireland, and as most of them, by the circumstances of their lives and conditions, knew little of the state of Ireland, they might at least inform their minds in regard to the country they had to govern by listening to such an instructive debate as that now proceeding. He noted also the absence of the Ulster Members. He dared say, in view of the Motion to be debated on Monday, these Gentlemen had other and more agreeable occupations to divert their attention from that House. But if the debate had been on the question, not of saving, but of coercing Ireland, the Unionist benches would have been crowded by an excited and enthusiastic audience, ready to contribute their share towards the disparagement of the character of the country. What had been proved that evening? He put it to the Chief Secretary that they could have alien government which was cheap and efficient. There were portions of the British Empire where alien government was cheap and still efficient, and there were other parts of the world where alien government was cheap and efficient. He did not know of a more successful Government in the world than the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, whose administration had certainly been both cheap and efficient. He was not sure whether a large number of Englishmen were of opinion that, though the government of England in Ireland might be unpopular and might be called alien, still it had the distinguishing marks of purity, cheapness and efficiency, which they regarded as belonging to British government in all parts of the world. The curious thing was that government in Ireland was dear, corrupt, and inefficient. The intelligence of the Irish people was admitted by every other race in the world. He could speak with some feeling and experience on this subject. When he was a young student in Galway College he saw a sight which could be seen in no part of the British dominions outside Ireland and Scotland. He saw the children of the poorest of the poor, the sons of laundresses, getting education as medical men and going out into the world and getting positions in which they could earn an excellent living. That showed the necessity of education for the people of Ireland. Yet in face of that they had the tragic feature of schools without fires, children without air, teachers without adequate salaries. They had education in a lower and meaner and less endowed position in a country that had only education to look to than in any other part of the British dominions, and side by side with the poor fireless school house was a white-washed, opulent, well paid police barracks. That was not the only tragic contrast of Irish life. In the eighteenth century when there was an Irish Parliament—he heard an hon. Gentleman above the gangway repeat the words "eighteenth century" by which he assumed he meant he was going a long way back to find a grievance for Ireland. The fact was that they were still governed in Ireland on eighteenth century methods.

Sir F. BANBURY: I am not sure that I should not like to see England governed in the same way.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR said that now they knew where they were. The only fault he had to find with that expression of opinion by the hon. Baronet was that he did not take the opportunity of revealing it on the platform at Peckham during the recent election. He was sure it would have helped the electors of what was once his constituency to a proper appreciation of Moderate and Tory policy. What he was saying was that in the eighteenth century there was a financial arrangement by which any job that was too crude for even eighteenth century England, the paradise of the hon. Baronet, should be put upon Ireland. If a bishop not considered sufficiently worthy for high prelatical position in England had to be provided for, he was sent to Ireland. If an official not sufficiently free from the then rather prevalent taint of peculation was too corrupt even for eighteenth century England—too strong for the digestion of England—he was sent to Ireland. Nay, if members of the fair sex whose career had been adventurous rather than edifying were found rather too unacceptable claimants for the bounty of the treasury of England, they were placed upon the exchequer of Ireland. That was the eighteenth century system in Ireland which the hon. Baronet would like to see extended to modern England.

SIR F. BANBURY: In the City of London we have no experience of ladies of that kind.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR said they all knew that the City of London was absolutely free from the taint or even the suspicion of any dealings not in absolute accordance with the Ten Commandments. But what was the twentieth century system? Now gentlemen of good family and defective intelligence found themselves without anything to do. A job was immediately found for them in the official hierarchy of Ireland. There were two twin instruments of government in Ireland, and he was not certain that he did not dislike the second more than the first. The first was repression by superior force. The second, and to some extent the more effective, was the corruption of the intellect of Ireland. He was not allowed to discuss the salaries of some of the high officials in Ireland, notably, of the Judges. If he was he would be compelled to call the attention of the House to the fact that whereas in England elevation to the Bench nearly always meant to a barrister a diminution of income, in Ireland it nearly always meant an augmentation, sometimes the doubling of his income. Going all through the course of official life in Ireland they found the same thing—innumerable cases of bloated salaries and of the hideous temptation that a rich country could offer to a poor country, with the additional wrong that the money and the bribe were given, not from the purse of the rich nation, but from the purse of the poor impoverished nation. As the hon. Member for East Tyrone had pointed out, the money thus extravagantly spent was not English money. It was Irish money. If it were English money it would be at least an excuse that it came from a rich country and in some respects at least from the richer classes. The aggravation of the evil was that the expenditure came not only from the poor country but from the poorest of the poor in the poor country, because indirect taxation in Ireland bore a proportion to direct taxation almost the converse of the proportion in England. In England the taxation was to a large extent paid by the rich. In Ireland it was paid to the extent of 73 per cent. by the poor. One of the things they constantly heard about Ireland was that the poor people drank too much tea, and so they did. Too much tea was drunk among the poor in all parts of the world. They drank too much tea in Whitechapel, in St. Giles's, and in parts of Glasgow. Why did they do it? Because tea was food, and the over-consumption of tea was a proof not of the extravagance of the poor but of the poverty of the poor, who sought in tea not only the stimulus that it gave but the food for which it was a substitute; and when they put these two pictures into juxtaposition—the official in Dublin paying an occasional visit to the office of the Board of Agriculture and spending the remainder of the day in a charitable discussion of the affairs of Ireland in the smoking-room of the Kildare Street Club—the unnecessary and the over-paid on the one side, and the poverty-stricken peasant of Mayo on the other, who was paying for them, they had as strong a condemnation of English rule in Ireland as they could have of the rule of any country. What was the remedy? The noble Lord proposed that they should have an investigation. He must note, and he commended it to the attention of the Chief Secretary as a significant fact in the debate, that all parties who had been represented had agreed that the expenditure of Ireland was excessive. That was an important fact. He thought it extravagant and wasteful. If he was not mistaken it was the first time they had had the fact admitted by the universal assent of all parties in Ireland. If the expenditure in Ireland was wasteful and extravagant they must find a remedy. What was the remedy—investigation by a new Royal Commission? Let them not talk to Irishmen about a Royal Commission upon Irish expenditure. They had had their experience on that subject.

More than a dozen years ago a Royal Commission consisting of Englishmen had come to the conclusion that Ireland was overtaxed by £3,250,000 a year, and the only result was that over-taxation had increased and gone on ever since that day. So they did not want any more Royal Commissions. They knew that their verdicts were ignored by Parliament. What was the use of reducing expenditure in Ireland? As the hon. Member for South Tyrone had said, it was Ireland's loss for England's gain. Their complaint, let it be observed, was not so much that England gained and Ireland lost by this old system, but that both England and Ireland lost, because whenever the taxation of the United Kingdom was increased, England did not gain anything by it, for if there was £1,000,000 increase on the Imperial taxation there was £2,000,000 increase on Irish taxation. There was only one remedy for it. They must give the expenditure of Irish money and the economising of Irish money to the Irishmen concerned. They alone would have the necessary interest, knowledge, and responsibility, and until that day came he regarded as futile and absurd any other means of bringing the condition of Ireland into that of a really well-governed country.

*Mr. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) said there was one point which struck him in the remarks of the last speaker. He referred to education, and he thought that the hon. Member would perhaps have indicated some practical reform, and have made some reference to a country where there were many Irishmen at the present moment—he referred to the United States and Canada, where they had adopted for education a consolidation scheme in connection with their schools, which was doing an enormous amount of good, and which might be applied with advantage to this country. What he alluded to was the system of consolidation of schools in Massachusetts and in Canada, whereby the children were reaping all the advantages of large schools with a great economy of labour and a diminution of expense. The organising secretary for the county of Buckinghamshire had lately returned from the United States and Canada full of the scheme in operation there. That system was giving to the teachers the greatest opportunity for the use of their powers in encouraging their pupils, and providing the children with those opportunities which could alone be given in big schools: beautiful buildings, and splendid playgrounds, with all the advantages of co-operation and consolidation which had been so marvellously shown in Ireland in quite another field of operation. As Ireland had taken the lead and taught them a lesson in agricultural consolidation and co-operation, so in education also it was possible that she might teach them a lesson. In a country which was sparsely populated, and where the advantages of consolidation and co-operation in educational matters would have such valuable results, was it not possible that the ability, the imaginative power, and the power of creation in the sister isle would rapidly bring the educational system of Ireland to an entirely different level from that at which it stood to-day? He hoped to see the principle of co-operation and consolidation applied in Ireland. Although £70,000 a year was spent in Massachusetts in conveying children backwards and forwards to the large schools, yet economy and actual reduction of expenditure had been produced by the system, and that was something which the Americans and the Canadians themselves had hardly anticipated. Those facts and figures might be confirmed and thoroughly proved and tested, and the success of that system would shortly be common knowledge. He knew nothing of the political question as it affected agricultural advance in Ireland, but he knew that in England they were often pointing to the Irish power of combination for the purpose of inspiring the English people in the same direction. He hoped that during the coming years they would be able in this country to do as much in the way of consolidating and co-operating their agricultural and educational systems to the advantage of the whole community as had undoubtedly been done by their Irish brethren across the seas.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.): I am sure no one will deny that the subject brought forward by the Resolution is one of great importance, and it was introduced in a speech of remarkable ability, which fully deserved the encomium generously passed upon it by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin. The Chief Secretaries for Ireland have not cut a very heroic figure in this debate, and the House has been assured that two or three months is quite sufficient to have exhausted all their vitality. We are also given to understand that they are capable of nothing except occasional jobs. I am the last man in the world to magnify my office; I would much rather be put under a microscope than exposed to a magnifying glass. But as I have ten living predecessors, I am bound to say on their behalf that, after all, during the short period in which they hold office they are not altogether left alone, and that at all events there are persons in Ireland who think them of quite sufficient importance to pay very marked attention to them, and even occasionally to ask something of them. It is a little difficult to separate this Resolution into its component parts. In the middle of the Resolution there is wedged in a good substantial bit of Home Rule, and with that part of the Resolution I entirely concur, for I at all events have no difficulty in that matter. With regard to some of the other questions raised, a little investigation might perhaps reveal that the case of the Irish administration is not quite so bad as is made out. I am satisfied that no person, to whatever party he belongs, will maintain that the mode of Irish administration is a good and sound one, that it is efficient and economical, or that it gives any real satisfaction to any portion of the Irish people. Nobody likes it or has much confidence in it, and no person who has been called on to administer it has ever really spoken a good word for it. Some may say that it is better than Home Rule, but it is rather a lamentable state of things that after all these years of the Union the most that anybody can say for the administration is that it is not efficient, that it is extravagant, and does not give satisfaction, but that it is at all events better than it would be if the task of spending their own money were entrusted to the people themselves. The hon. Member for East Tyrone pleaded for clean, honest, and efficient administration. Surely that is what we all long and look for, but we certainly have not yet got it, at all events on the economical side, and we are at a loss to know how the resources of Ireland should best be ministered to and husbanded. It has been said that there are some cheerful symptoms. I am glad to think that even the cattle trade is thriving. I am glad to believe that the deposits in banks are increasing, although that is not a very good sign of commercial prosperity. If people can do nothing better with their money than put it into a bank at a very low rate of interest in order to allow the bank and their shareholders to earn some 15 or 16 per cent., that cannot be taken as proof of commercial prosperity, but rather of the lack of investment for people who have been able to save a little money. Quite irrespective of those features, we have only to look at the Revenue Returns to see how poor is the country. The total revenues collected for 1906–7 are £11,399,000, of which £8,000,000 is derived from Customs and Excise. The hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool has drawn attention to he fact that the poor in Ireland drink large quantities of tea, and smoke many ounces of tobacco. That, in my opinion, is proof of the inadequacy of their sustenance and not of the extravangance of their taste. The income-tax which produces in England over £28,000,000, produces in Ireland only £999,000. Therefore, we have in Ireland a country whose revenue is derived from indirect taxation upon articles which must be described as articles not of luxury, but of prime necessity. In these circumstances it is perfectly fair to say, whatever hon. Members may allege to the contrary, that Ireland, being a poor country, unhappily for her economic peace of mind—whatever political benefits she may derive—is damnified by being so closely associated with a country of such expensive tastes as England. I know of nothing in private life more disadvantageous to a poor man than to have rich relatives. I am a poor man, but I am glad to say I have no rich relatives, and consequently I have been able to fix my own habits and live my own life. A poor man with rich relatives feels bound, especially if he be of a sanguine disposition, to launch into extravagances wholly destructive of his peace of mind and calculated to drive him into the Bankruptcy Court. A rich relative makes you a present of a motor-car, saying it is charming to run down to Brighton, to lunch at the Hotel Métropole, and to get back in time for dinner. But you soon find that a few such runs and a few such luncheons, and the expenses of chauffeur and petrol, and things of that kind—not to speak of dangers by the way—are sufficient in twelve months to wholly upset your standard of life and destroy your peace of mind. Therefore, hon. Gentlemen from Ireland are perfectly justified in saying, "We cannot see the advantage of being called upon to contribute such heavy taxation for purposes which do us no particular good. They might do us good if we were as rich as you are, but if you are not prepared to supplement us we object very much to be taxed on the same footing as yourselves. We do not want such things. We are unable to share in these heavy expenses; and consequently we have to deny ourselves those glories which are so dear to the British mind." That is a perfectly fair and legitimate argument. Therefore, if you put this question upon general grounds, I think there is a good deal to be said for many of the terms of the Resolution.

But when we come to criticise the details, when we call attention, for example, to the excessive cost of the administration of the various Departments for which I am responsible, there are a few facts which ought not to be overlooked. Take the case of the Local Government Board. Sometimes the figures of the Local Government Board are compared with that of the corresponding Board in England, but you must remember that in Ireland you have assigned to the Local Government Board all the work—the most important and beneficial work—connected with your labourers' cottages and medical charities Acts. The work in connection with the provision of labourers' cottages and the administration of the Medical Charities Act take £34,000 out of the £82,000 which is the cost of that Department. I do not think anybody will dispute that the Labourers Act has been enormously beneficial to Ireland. I know of nothing in my experiences of Ireland which gives me more profound satisfaction than the springing up all over the country of these admirable cottages. I have also noticed that the Irish people, who have very often been accused of living in a sort of heathenish state, have already shown a taste for cottage decoration, and for cleanly and even beautiful homes, which is calculated to make every right-thinking man very joyful. But these labourers' cottages cost money, largely owing to legal expenses, which are the curse of every country. The district councils have to make bargains for the purchase of the land. The land has to be inspected, and consequently the army of inspectors which is the despair of all economists, has had to be very largely increased. If we would act in the spirit of the revolution which was the outcome of that century so dear to the heart of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, we could do things more economically. But in Ireland we are a people of law and order. There is more respect shown for property in Ireland than in many other parts of the Empire. You can get nothing in Ireland without paying for it—aye, without paying through the nose for it. As President of the Local Government Board, I know, and it is my duty to know, the price that has to be paid for every acre of land upon which a cottage is built; and I say it is an extravagant price, and a price which ought to be most gratifying to the mind of the Member for the City of London who likes everybody to be paid for what he has to sell. He may rest perfectly assured that everybody in Ireland who parts with his property is being paid its full value, and rather more than its full value. But, as I was saying, it is only fair to remember that this Local Government Board has imposed upon it the task of working the Labourers Act at a cost of £26,500 a year, and it is not to be blamed for having been obliged to increase this army of inspectors. We do not want this army of inspectors, but as my hon. friend has already pointed out, you cannot build 20,000 labourers' cottages on little bits of land scattered all over Ireland without inspection, without a great deal of the red tape which we all, at the bottom of our hearts, deplore, but from which none of us are able to extricate ourselves.

It is just the same with the Land Commission. It is impossible to carry out the beneficent work contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover without inspection unless you are prepared to act on revolutionary principles, which we all abhor. In changing the land of the country to the occupying tenants you must have an army of inspectors in order to protect property and secure payments and carry out all the details, not of a revolutionary proceeding, but of a quiet City of London proceeding. I regret that they have to be paid, but I am not at all sure that they are paid too much. Their cost totals up to a large figure. They are a terrible burden, and, what is worse even than the burden, they do occasion, in the exercise of their excellent work, great delay, which is a matter of extreme irritation to both landlord and tenant. I know nothing that is more irritating, more endangering to the peace of the country, more injuring to the beneficent work which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had in view, than the delay which has taken place in carrying out contracts and agreements come to betweeen landlord and tenant. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why do you not find the money?] The money will be found when the work has been done. The delay has not been occasioned by the Treasury refusing the money. I do not say that the Treasury may not have a certain sinister pleasure of late years in seeing the difficulties in our way. Whenever a contract has been completed the Treasury has never yet refused to supply the money. I am explaining these two things—the Labourers Act and the Medical Charities Act—as something which the Local Government Board in England has not got to do, and it is only fair to remember that you mnst deduct a large sum from the Estimate which appears on our Papers as the charge for this Board.

I fully appreciate what the hon. Member said about the number of officials in Ireland. I do not think you can get out of the figures that he presented to the House. But at the same time you have got to bear in mind that you are doing things in Ireland which you are not doing to a like extent in Scotland, and which you are not doing at all in England, and that these things cannot be done without employing persons. The Local Government Board have, in this matter of Poor Law relief and the like—I do not know whether it is a good thing or a bad—a much more inquisitorial authority, and a number of multifarious duties which do involve the employment of a great staff of inspectors. I do not think it is altogether fair—in fact, it is most unfair—to say that the administration for which I or any of my predecessors have been responsible is a corrupt administration because of the fact that we had to create and appoint all these officials. I daresay that we have often appointed the wrong people; but, Heaven help us, how could we avoid it? I am quite sure that all my predecessors, as myself, have had only one desire in this matter, and that has been to choose the person who, at all events, would give us the least trouble, and discharge the duties of his office with honesty and efficacy. Though there may be a certain number of lazy and incompetent persons, I do not believe that the number is one fraction larger than the number in England or Scotland. My own experience of them is that, although most of them were glad to get the job, and, perhaps, would not have known whereelse to get so good a job, once they have got the job, they have devoted their time and their energy, with some exceptions I dare say, to the discharge of their duties. As to salaries, those of the Irish Civil servant are smaller than those of his brother in England, and that sometimes is made a little bit of an Irish grievance. There are clerks in the Office over which I preside who do duties precisely of the same kind as clerks in the English Home Office, for example, and they are not paid anything like the same salaries as their corresponding brothers are here. I really do not think, when you come to deal economically with this thing, although you may be able to reduce, in time, your army of commissioners and inspectors, that you will be able to work much reduction upon their salaries. "Salaries of Judges" is happily out of order. I would like to say a word upon the vexed question of police. I do not know whether the figures have been given to the House precisely in the form I will give them, but I think it will be worth the while of hon. Members to get them into their heads. In England and Wales in 1905–6 the gross total cost of police, including pensions, was £6,043,470; the Exchequer contribution was £2,363,000, £3,000,000 falling on local rates; the total cost per head of population, 3s. 6d.; Exchequer contribution per head of population being 1s. 4d. In Scotland the total cost was £583,347; the Exchequer contribution including contribution to pension fund £219,000; the difference between £219,000 and £583,000 is borne by local contribution; total cost per head of population, 2s. 6d. In Ireland the total cost, including pensions, is £1,460,000; that is all borne by the Exchequer, I agree, out of Irish money; total cost per head of population, 6s. 7d., as compared with the 2s. 6d. for Scotland and 3s. 6d. for England. But then, what am I to say for myself? I am the last person to conceal a retort, particularly when it is so obvious that it could hardly be overlooked by anybody. I appear here as having increased the police force by 400 men. I am glad to say that even that increase brings the force much lower than it was in such bad times as 1883–4, when the number of police was 14,277, whereas now it is 9,900. It is said you ought to be able to get rid in Ireland of this monstrous cost of police, 6s. 7d. per head of the population. If that is put as a question of policy I dare say there is a good deal in it. You may say "Change your policy and you change your cost." But that is not wholly in my power. Being here responsible as Chief Secretary for Ireland, a member of an Administration which is not in a position during this Parliament to deal with any great change of policy in Ireland, I am clearly bound and they are bound to maintain in Ireland such a force of police as is necessary, our policy being what it is, to secure law and order in all parts of Ireland. You ask me why did I increase the force by 400 men. My answer is, because the Irish people took to cattle-driving. The cattle-driving policy in the opinion of some people may be worth the cost of the 400 policemen; but I think no fair-minded man, whatever his politics may be, be he Unionist or Nationalist, can deny that, our policy being what it is, it is very difficult to see how you can reduce this costly police force, things being what they are. I dare say there is a great deal of truth in what was said by the hon. Member who introduced this Motion; that the pension scheme may seem somewhat extravagant; and that Ireland is supporting a considerable number of able-bodied men who have served in this police force. But assuming the police force to be necessary [Cries from the IRISH Benches of "Oh!"]—our policy being what it is—you have to secure to these men fair and reasonable terms and to offer them remuneration sufficient for their needs; and I cannot say—I will not say—that in my judgment the Royal Irish Constabulary are one bit overpaid. In fact, when there was an inquiry some years ago into their circumstances, a report was made advocating certain additions which, so far as they could be carried out administratively, have been carried out, but so far as they required legislation have never been carried out from that day to this. What would our position have been in regard to cattle-driving if we had not employed the police to prevent it, to arrest the perpetrators, and to take part in the peaceful pastoral occupation of restoring bullocks to their owners? I do not think that when you have a Home Rule Government—and I hope that some day, and soon, you will [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh! oh,"]—well, I may be allowed to express a hope, we may all have our hopes, the hon. Member himself may have hopes of Heaven. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh!"]

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I only hope I may meet the right hon. Gentleman there.

MR. BIRRELL: I do not know that there will be many opportunities of knocking up against one's acquaintances there. I was saying that any Government, be it Home Rule or other, is bound to use the police to maintain law and order. You may think, and I hope your expectations may be realised, that you might do this with a smaller, cheaper force than you have now, but the point I am labouring is that we, pursuing our present policy, which we do not at present propose to change, are bound to maintain a sufficient force to meet the exigencies of the situation, and when the exigencies of the situation renders an increase of that force necessary we are bound to make that increase. But all this does not interfere with the moral lesson to be drawn from the fact that after 100 years of union we find it necessary to maintain a police force—a force that might be called by another name—which costs 6s. 7d. per head of the population. Surely that presents for any economist a great field for future operations, but I do not admit that the force can now be substantially reduced, nor am I prepared to admit, having regard to the multifarious duties—I will not stop to read a page or two detailing them, but they are duties quite different from those the police have to discharge in England or Scotland—that their pay or pensions are framed on an extravagant scale. I shall be glad if the opportunity offers, and indeed the obligation will remain on the House, to keep faith with that body of men and to carry out recommendations made on their behalf so many years ago. If that can be accompanied by economy nobody will be more delighted than myself.

One word on education, a subject near and dear to me. Although Chief Secretaries are mere phantoms of the hour and disappear—as I am reminded every day when I bring down my budget of Answers to Questions in an envelope still bearing the name of my predecessor; it has been thought unnecessary to alter it, no doubt, because of the precarious nature of the tenure—during the time I have been in office I have not been wholly unsuccessful in securing, not an adequate, but substantial, assistance to teachers' salaries. Nobody is more alive than I to the miserable condition of too many of the school houses in Ireland, both in the north and in other parts. Inspectors have told me that, over and over again, after going to a school, the first thing they have done has been to insist on the children going back home, soaked through in scanty clothing, from buildings almost entirely unwarmed, where the teacher was struggling to light a miserable fire with peat brought by the children. I hope before my time is up to make some substantial improvement in this condition of things; but, as to education itself, I do not think I need now trouble the House much with figures except to say that hon. Members below the gangway make a mistake which is often fallen into in their comparisons with Scotland in regard to technical and secondary education. I know it is very difficult to distinguish between them. But you get your educational grant in Ireland, £1,421,971, or 6s. 5½d. per head, and you know little is raised from local rates for educational purposes. In England and Wales the local rates for education are £9,230,000, or 5s. 5½d. per head, and in Scotland £1,000,000 odd, or 4s. 10½d.; in Ireland £26,000, or 1½d. per head. You, therefore, find an insufficient sum out of Irish money spent on primary education. You want it increased, and increased it certainly must be. I do not want to go back on past history, but one of the considerations which induced me to take a favourable view of the Council Bill was that it did supply money which might have been used for great educational reforms in Ireland. But those reforms, undoubtedly, are only postponed a little longer. The point of the speech of the hon. Member who introduced the Motion was that he wanted a distribution, that is to say, he wanted the money taken away from the police and spent on education. A most pious and noble resolution. But for the purposes of this Resolution it would show that all the services are excessively and extravagantly conducted, and I think that would be rather more difficult to show than some hon. Gentlemen below the gangway think.

MR. KETTLE said he had referred to certain services.

MR. BIRRELL: The hon. Member was clear that far too little money was spent on education and far too much on police. In that, of course, I entirely agree with him, except that I am bound to say that at the present moment, under our present circumstances, I do not think the amount spent on police can be described as excessive, though I quite agree it is not economical. Consequently, money cannot be obtained from that quarter for increasing the educational services. I hope in the

Estimates that come to be considered it will be found that, although we have not found it possible to reduce the expenditure on police, we have been able to increase the expenditure on education. As to the number of officials in Ireland, I cannot deny that it is somewhat alarmingly great in proportion to what obtains in other countries or other parts of the Empire. But against that you have to remember that in Ireland you are carrying on great temporary works, experimental works in a sense, which do of necessity require the employment of a large number of officials. When land purchase, for example, has been carried out, and when the Congested Districts Board has got to the end of its work—no one can exactly determine when that will be—this great army of inspectors will grow beautifully less, and finally, let us trust, dwindle down to the comparatively modest dimensions it assumes in England and Scotland. I fully recognise that the present mode of administration in Ireland, in the language of the Resolution, is little calculated to minister to the well-being of the Irish people. It is an ignominous form of government, ignominous to the Irish themselves and to a very large degree to the Chief Secretary who has to carry on this work. The sooner it is brought to an end the better; the sooner the establishment of Ireland can be made responsible for itself and self-supporting, the better for all concerned. In the meantime some of the services are carried on, I daresay, somewhat lavishly, but I do not think you could prove, even on the closest inquiry, that there was anything approaching to corruption,and I was very sorry that that word was used. I do not think any trace of corruption can be found. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: What about the Secret Service Fund?] I am not sensible of anything that can be called corruption in carrying on the affairs of Ireland. So far as the administration of patronage is concerned, it is always open to great and grave objections, not only in Ireland but in all other countries. But I do not think it is at all just and proper to found any allegation of anything that can be called corruption in Irish affairs. I have no doubt whatever, and I am certainly not ashamed of the faith that is in me or the half-faith that has been in many people who have had anything to do with Irish affairs, that the only solution of this question will be found in a liberal measure of what is compendiously called Home Rule. But at the present moment all I can say is that, though some of the services are somewhat lavish, I do not think that the hon. Member would be able with the closest possible inquiry to make out the whole of his case, or to say that the services of Ireland deserve all the harsh things that have been said about them.

*MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): As previous speakers have said something about myself I may perhaps be permitted to say a few words. I do not wish to import a controversial tone into the debate, but I think that the right hon. Gentleman will agree that it is impossible for a Unionist to rise without dissociating himself entirely from the right hon. Gentleman's concluding observation. The House discusses a question of this kind with marked disadvantage when it is handled by a Chief Secretary who proclaims himself a Home Ruler, and at the same time is precluded from introducing a Home Rule Bill. The Nationalists are Home Rulers, and if they had a majority they would bring in a measure to give effect to their principles. But as Home Rule is excluded from the discussion and also the consideration of the economic condition of Ireland, so far as the right hon. Gentleman is concerned, I hope that I am not adopting a polemical tone if I say that the Chief Secretary, being precluded from being an active Home Ruler, does not make his own task of governing Ireland according to the Union easier by describing the form of government as an ignominious form of government, and by saying that the sooner it is brought to an end the better. What in fact, has the Chief Secretary been able to do recently? To increase the number of the police force and to decrease the amount of money spent by the Congested Districts Board on certain useful functions.

MR. BIRRELL: I never decreased it.

MR. WYNDHAM: The right hon. Gentleman said he had decreased it.

MR. BIRRELL was understood to say that he pointed out with great regret that the Congested Districts Board had a statutory income, and that it was not sufficient to pay for certain expenditure.

*MR. WYNDHAM: At all events the funds of the Congested Districts Board have not gone up, and some of the most useful work of the Board, the support of parish committees, has ceased.

MR. BIRRELL: There is no connection between the two things.

MR. WYNDHAM: I will take the state of Ireland now. The facts of the situation are such that the right hon. Gentleman ought to try to govern under the limitations which he acknowledges instead of indulging hopes for the future which the right hon. Gentleman and his friends cannot bring any nearer. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Local Government Board and the Land Commission. I do not believe that anyone seriously desires a diminution in the cost of the Local Government Board in Ireland. Certain parts of Ireland are exposed to visitations which necessitate inspectors, and no one advocates less inspection, because without inspection there can be no case brought forward for giving aid where aid is needed. I personally believe that it is not possible to reduce the cost of administration in that Department; and when it comes to the Land Commission, I do not think that anyone will urge that the cost should be cut down at the present moment. But what some persons say is that the Government have recently added to the cost of that Commission and to the number of officials in it without producing any expedition in the process of land purchase. This has led some persons to believe that the Government are not efficiently concerned in pushing forward land purchase at the present time.

MR. BIRRELL: The right hon. Gentleman forgets the increase necessitated by the evicted tenants.

MR. WYNDHAM: Some persons think that this is an unnecessary addition which the right hon. Gentleman has made to the burdens which he has to bear already. The two points of the discussion are: Can we effect economies in Irish government? And if we can, can we do something to improve education in Ireland, and to develop its agricultural and industrial resources? We have to exclude the constitutional argument of Home Rule, and we are also precluded from considering the fiscal system. I believe it is true that the taxable capacity of Ireland and the Imperial contribution of Ireland depend more on the kind of taxation you have there than anything else. If you are debarred from discussing the question of Home Rule *versus* Union, which is specially reserved until Monday next, and practically from considering the present fiscal system, nothing is left in this debate but the question of whether any money which the Government may have at their disposal is to be used to the best advantage for the purpose of improving Irish education, and developing the resources of the country. As the area is so limited it is well to clear the ground inside the limits of that area. If we cannot discuss Home Rule, still less is it wise to shed a tear over the unlamented urn of last year's Council Bill. That also goes by the board. I really do not understand the allusion to that measure by the Vice-President and the Chief Secretary, because all it would have done would have been to add another £600,000 to the cost of administration which is now being imposed on the country. So also I think we may put aside the comparison drawn by the hon. Member between Ireland and such countries as Portugal. Underlying all this there was the Home Rule question. We have to look at Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom. I hope it will always remain so. The right hon. Gentleman has no such desire.

MR. BIRRELL: I have no desire that Ireland should cease to be an integral part of the United Kingdom.

MR. WYNDHAM: Taking the situation as it is, and that is what I am suggesting the right hon. Gentleman ought to do, and what we suggest he did not do, the cost of Irish government must be greater relatively to Ireland than the cost of English government. Every part of Ireland demands that there shall be a number of separate departments in Ireland, and that they shall be Irish Departments. There is not, I believe, an Irish Member who would wish that the local government of Ireland should be a part of the English local government. So it is with every other Department. And as there is a reduction on taking a quantity so if you will have separate Departments for the smaller and poorer country the cost must be relatively larger. You cannot escape it. You could economise if you made the Union a logical whole, if you carried it further than it has been carried before, if you made Ireland so many counties in the United Kingdom, with the same Local Government Board. But I believe there is not a single Irishman who desires that, and if you have a separate Local Government Board, Agricultural Department, Prisons Board, and Lunacy Board, the cost of the government of Ireland must be greater relatively than that of England. The cost of governing a country of 4,000,000 inhabitants must be greater than the cost of governing 36,000,000. Then we have to remember that Ireland, in respect of education, unanimously prefers to have schools which suit the views of those who live in the country. That is a costly matter. If you have to suit the views of people whose views differ—a course of which I am in favour—you must have more schools, and then the building grant must be heavy. The cost must be inflated. If you are to have schools which suit the views of the various component parts of the population you will find it very difficult to have a rate in aid of education, and in Ireland there is not a rate in aid of education. That, again, makes the cost of Irish government seem heavier than it really is. There is one argument of the mover of the Motion which really will not hold water. He gives us the amount of money contributed by the Exchequer for this purpose per head of the population. But I think he is aware that in Ireland there is no compulsory provision for education all over Ireland, and the proportion per head for the children is much lower in Ireland than in England or Scotland. Hon. Members have criticised the whole basis of the equivalent grant. What is the basis of the equivalent grant? It is that when a large sum of money is voted in respect of England or Scotland for a new service, a proportionate amount of money shall be voted for Ireland for new services, but not for an automatic increase upon old services, and not certainly for levelling up the standard to what I might call decency in Ireland. There is not an Irish Member who does not desire that the Irish child and Irish teacher should have a better time than they now have. But if you mix up that question with the question of the equivalent grant, the Irish teacher and the Irish child never will have a better time than they have now. You have to say that the Irish child and the Irish teacher are entitled to certain things. If that is assented to, the money has to be found. The question of the equivalent grant is another matter. It turns only on this fact—that, if a considerable sum of money is found for quite new services in one other of the three countries, there is a moral obligation for every Unionist to find a new source of money for some service equally required in Ireland. Therefore, I would ask whether it is true, as the Chief Secretary seems to suggest, that there is no hope for Ireland under Unionism in the field of economic administration and the development of the resources of Ireland. The Unionist Party are the only Party who by their policy are able to give a vote to which they can give effect. It is all very well to say: "I am a Home Ruler, but cannot pass Home Rule." The Unionists can govern Ireland in a manner which is conducive to the interests of Ireland. Looking back on the last twenty years, for the greater part of which the Unionist Party were in power, they have sought to economise on non-productive services in Ireland and to find money for productive services in Ireland. Can not that hope be enlarged? It can if all those, whether they be Ministers sitting on the Front Bench or those hon. Gentlemen below the gangway who have power and influence, use their influence to diminish the causes which inflate the cost of law and police in Ireland. Then, and then only, by that means is it possible to effect economies in the unnecessary and unproductive portions of Irish government.

AN IRISH MEMBER: If you fulfil the pledges you made in the Land Purchase Bill of 1903 you would remove the cause of the present trouble in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: I do not wish to go back to the discussions of 1903, but I can say that I have always tried to keep any pledges I have made. If we can diminish the causes which inflate the cost of maintaining law and order, then, under the Unionist *regime*, which is the *regime* the right hon. Gentleman had got to administer, undoubtedly there are savings which could be allocated to the Irish Fund for improving new services in Irish education and developing Irish resources. That is the policy of the late Government. Let that be the policy of the present Government until they are in a position to come down to the House and say that their views on Home Rule are practical views, and not views which they can not introduce into this House, which Unionists would always resist and which for the moment are not a part of practical politics.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

SIR F. BANBURY said an interesting discussion had taken place upon the Motion, but he would like to say a few words on the English question. He wished to draw attention to the matter from the point of view of England. When the Government came into power they informed the House that the new *regime* was one of economy and efficiency, and he desired to call attention to the way in which the Government had carried out the pledges they gave last session, to show that there had been no economy, and that it was extremely doubtful whether there had been any efficiency. It was quite certain that expenditure had increased without the nation having gained any corresponding advantage. The true definition of economy did not mean that necessary expenditure should be saved, because if that were done it would only need greater expenditure to be incurred in the future. Neither did it consist in cutting down the expenditure required to maintain efficiently a given department either of a business or of the State. The power of administration was not given to everybody. It did not follow at all because a person was able to make a very interesting speech that he was capable of administering; on the contrary, the reverse was often the case. A real token of a good administration was when he produced the same, or possibly better, results, without increasing the amount of money spent. Had the Government succeeded in doing that? It was not for him to allude in any way to the question of the Army and Navy; he would confine himself strictly to the question before the House. It had, in his experience, been the custom for the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, before the question was put, to present to the House the Memoranda detailing the general facts of the Estimates before them. On this occasion no such Memoranda had been presented; the Estimates were not even bound up in one volume. Why was it this had not been done? They were told to look forward to a period when the administration, at any rate, of the Government would be done in a businesslike manner; when the "gilded duffers" would disappear, and men of business would take their places. He had failed to observe any change in that direction; on the contrary, he had observed that the facilities they had been accustomed to had been denied them, and that the Estimates were simply thrown at their heads, and they were expected to shut their eyes and accept them. He had taken the trouble to do for himself what the Financial Secretary of the Treasury should have done for them, and he found that in Class I. there was an increase of £160,000, in Class II., an increase of £85,000, in the Revenue Departments an increase of £1,013,000, and in Part III. of the Revenue an increase of £109,000, making a total increase of £1,367,000. This was from the Party of economy, and was on the Civil Service Estimates—unproductive expenditure—and for a Department which was not an insurance.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): Has the hon. Baronet included the Post Office?

SIR F. BANBURY said he thought he had, and he was coming to the Post Office afterwards. The increase he had included was £400,000, whereas, according to the statement of the Postmaster-General, within a year the increase would be very nearly £700,000. He therefore thought the interruption of the hon. Gentleman was a little inopportune. There was something to be said on the other side; a case was bad indeed if one could not say something in favour of it. Nobody was quite as bad as they were painted. There was something, but very little, to be said for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. There was a decrease in the Revenue Department No. 4, of £128,000, in No. 5, Revenue Department, of £248,000, in Miscellaneous of £263,000, and in Class 6 of £34,000. Adding these together they arrived at £673,000, and, subtracting that from the sum of £1,367,000, they arrived at a net increase of £694,000, which was arrived at in the following way. Last year there was a miscellaneous vote of £200,000 for the unemployed. That did not appear this year, and was not therefore a decrease. The result was that in that particular Department there was no saving in the ordinary expenditure; on the contrary, he was afraid they might look for a supplementary estimate for a certain sum, whatever it might be, for provision for the unemployed. He was quite certain, if the Government did not bring it forward, the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway would ask them why they did not do so. He therefore maintained that so far as that was concerned the decrease of £200,000 was absolutely illusory. In the Colonial Vote, too, there was a sum last year of £150,000 for the earthquake in Jamaica. That of course, did not appear again in these Estimates, and the saving was not a real saving. It was merely the non-appearance of an item which appeared last year for circumstances which they all hoped would never arise again. There therefore appeared to be a saving of £350,000 which was really nothing of the sort. The real increase, consequently, was something over £1,000,000. And that was not all. He had included an increase of £400,000 in the Post Office, whereas, if his memory was not wrong, the Postmaster-General informed them that the amount of the increase would be very nearly £700,000. He might therefore add another £300,000. He was, however, content to add £200,000, and that made the increase over £1,200,000. But even that was not all. If the Education Bill became law, £1,400,000 would be added to the expenditure, and if they added those two figures together they arrived at a total of £2,680,000. And this was a Government of economy. That was a sufficiently startling indictment if it stood alone, but he was not at all sure that it did stand alone, because last year the Irish Council Bill was brought in which, if it had been carried, would have added £600,000 more. Every step in that direction was going to cost additional money. Again, things were placed upon the rates which ought to come on the Estimates; in arriving at a correct estimate, those also should be taken into account. He had now shown that part of the economy was due to Civil Service Estimates which ought to be increased beyond the present amount by no less than £2,600,000. A reduction had been effected in the expenditure in the administration of the Aliens Act of something like £1,300, by a reduction in the inspectors—the people who did the most important work of the Act. The administration of the Aliens Act had altered so much since the present Government came into power, that he desired to ask whether it was in accordance with Parliamentary precedent, that a Government by its administration should so alter the effect of an Act as to change it entirely from what Parliament intended it to be. True economy was not cutting down expenditure and getting no result out of what was eventually spent. True economy was to cut down the expenditure and produce the same results for the reduced amount spent. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, by his reduction under the Aliens Act, had not only not produced the same result, but had succeeded in producing no result at all, and, at the same time, had diminished the expenditure very slightly.

MR. RUNCIMAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided :—Ayes, 182 ; Noes, 31. (Division List, No. 56.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Alden, Percy
Allen, A.Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Baker, Joseph A.(Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies,David(Montgomery Co.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W. H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dillon, John
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone.Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C.(Rochdale)
Harvey,W. E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lever, A. Levy(Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk Bg'hs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meehan,Francis E.(Leitrim,N.)
Meehan, Patrick A.(Queen'sCo.
Menzies, Walter
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murnaghan, George
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Seely, Colonel
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Waring, Walter
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson,P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Condon, Thomas Joseph

Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hunt, Rowland
Keswick, William
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Winterton, Earl
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL.

Read a second time.

Bill committed to a Select Committee.—(*Mr. Robert Pearce.*)

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do now adjourn."

SIR F. BANBURY said he had given notice to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury that he would ask him to explain why he had departed from the usual custom and not given them a Memorandum accompanying the Estimates issuing from his Department. He presumed the hon. Gentleman had some explanation to offer and he should be glad to have it.

MR. RUNCIMAN said he was sorry the hon. Baronet had not been supplied with a Memorandum. As a matter of fact it was completed immediately they compiled the last of the classes in the Civil Service Estimates. It had been ready for well over a week, and he did not know why it had not been circulated. He would see that an advance copy was placed in the hand of the hon. Baronet.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said the Memorandum ought to have been in their hands before, and the fact that it had not been supplied would have afforded technical ground for postponing the Motion that Mr. Speaker do leave the Chair. He hoped that the Secretary to the Treasury would make inquiries with the view of ascertaining how the error had occurred.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland) said it was all very well for the Secretary to the Treasury to say that he did not know why the Memorandum had not been circulated, but somebody should be censured for its not having been attended to. The salaries of officials had to be paid whether the work was done or not. It was not fair to withhold information in that way, and then when the Estimates came on for consideration to closure discussion. That was contrary to the usual practice of the House of Commons, and if the Secretary to the Treasury could not get into a better state of mind, he would have something to say on the subject when the hon. Gentleman's salary came on for discussion. The House was entitled to a better explanation than the hon. Gentleman had given.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) said the explanation given to the House in regard to the absence of the Memorandum was not adequate, and those who took an interest in the national finances had a right to feel aggrieved. He associated himself with the protest which had been made.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said it was unsatisfactory not to have had the Memorandum before. He thought the Secretary to the Treasury had treated the House very cavalierly in the answer he had given.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) asked when the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill and the Education Bill would be taken.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said his right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had already informed the House that the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill would be taken on Monday week. No arrangement had been made in regard to the Education Bill up to the present time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 27th March, 1908.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1).

2. Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation.

3. Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation.

4. Madras Railway Company (Annuities).

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 27th March, 1908.

The House met at twelve noon of the Clock.

COMMISSION.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went, and, having returned,

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1908.

2. Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Act, 1908.

3. Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Act, 1908.

4. Madras Railway (Annuities) Act, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

City of Glasgow Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Motherwell Burgh Extension, &c., Bill. — Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Partick, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Sowerby Bridge, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petition from Lee, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Bristol; Elsecar; Hoyland (three); London; Salisbury; Sevenhampton; and Wath on Dearne (two); to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Ardsley; Bettyhill; Blyth; Bolton; Bristol; Denholme; Dundee; Dunscar; Lancaster; Liverpool; Nenthead; Newcastle-upon-Tyne (two); Sowerby Bridge; Trimdon; and Wilmslow; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLITAN SEWERS AND DRAINS BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

OPEN SPACES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, against; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour. From Felton; and, Newton on the Moor; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

WORKMEN'S INSURANCE (GERMANY).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th February; *Mr. Lewis Haslam*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 102.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Urban District Council of Donaghadee, and confirmed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, fixing the Hours for Closing certain Shops in the Urban District [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TURKEY (No. 1, 1908).

Copy presented, of further Correspondence respecting Proposals by His Majesty's Government for Reforms in Macedonia [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

REVENUE (COLLECTION OF TAXES).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 4th March; *Mr. McCrae*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 103.]

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES, AND VACCINATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of the Fifty-third Annual Report on the Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland for 1907 and Forty-third Annual Report on Vaccination [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING CONDITIONS (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Return showing the Housing Conditions of the Population of Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC ACTS, 1854 TO 1894.

Copy presented, of Nineteenth Annual Report of the Railway and Canal Commission, with Appendix [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Pay of Bexhill Telegraphists

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that under the Hobhouse award the maximum wages for male telegraphists at Hastings and Eastbourne is 52s. per week, while at Bexhill the maximum is fixed at 40s. per week; and, seeing that the cost of living at Bexhill is quite equal to Hastings and Eastbourne, whether he can explain the disparity of wages existing between officials of the same grade.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The recommendation of the Select Committee was that the new classification should be based upon the volume of work and the cost of living, and not on the cost of living alone. The position of Bexhill in the new classification has not yet been definitely settled.

Post Office Telephones—Pay of Staff.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state when the scheme for placing the male clerical staff of the general manager of the Post Office (London) telephone service on the establishment will come into force; whether the positions to be created will carry pay and conditions of service equal with those given for similar work in the other branches of the Post Office; and whether the appointments will be given to the unestablished men who have hitherto carried out the work.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) As the noble Lord is, I think, aware, the question is still before the Treasury. I am not, therefore, in a position at present to make any announcement on the subject.

Moneylenders and Lord Mayor's Court.

MR. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will state the number of defended and undefended actions brought before the Lord Mayor's Court of the City of London by licensed moneylenders during the year 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I am informed by the registrar of the Lord Mayor's Court that there is no record in the Court books to show by what classes of persons actions are brought. A litigant sues only in his individual name, and there are no means of identifying any plaintiff as being a moneylender or otherwise.

Age Retirement in the Inland Revenue Service.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether officers of all grades in the Excise branch of the Inland Revenue Service are required to superannuate at the age of 62, whereas officers occupying corresponding positions and performing similar work in the Customs branch do not superannuate until they reach the age of 65, and, if so, why this distinction is made; and whether the effect of such superannuation of men, physically and mentally able to perform their official duties, is to increase the non-effective charge in this department.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) In all departments of the public service an established officer may be called upon to retire at the age of 60. Retention beyond this age depends upon efficiency, but retirement is compulsory in ordinary cases at the age of 65. These rules are acted upon in the departments referred to in the Question, but it is the practice of the Board of Inland Revenue to require all officers to retire at the age of 62, provided they have completed 40 years of pensionable service, and that their retirement at this age is not thought to be detrimental to the public interest. No doubt the earlier the age for retirement the greater becomes the non-effective charge, but the Board are of opinion that, in the interests of efficient administration, the general rule they have adopted should be maintained.

Yard Craft No. 11.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty of what material the hull of yard craft No. 11 is being constructed; whether she has any sleeping accommodation, and, if so, for how many people; whether she has any hold for the carriage of stores or other goods, and, if so, how many tons can she carry; whether she has any cranes or derricks, and, if so, how many tons can they lift; and how many capstans, windlasses, and winches has she got.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The hull of yard craft No. 11 is constructed of steel. Messing and sleeping accommodation is provided for 40 men. A large hold is provided, fitted with all necessary appliances for getting heavy mooring chains in and out. 170 tons of moorings or other cargo can be carried in this hold. She is fitted with a horn at the bow capable of lifting 30 tons, a derrick to lift six tons, and special fittings at the bow and stern to enable her to salve sunken submarines. Two powerful steam capstans, a steam winch, one steam winding bollard, and a smith's forge are supplied, and a number of large bollards are fitted on each side for mooring work.

Dismissal of Sir Arthur Vicars.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Sir Arthur Vicars' dismissal was decided upon before the 28th October, 1907, and that he was so informed in a letter bearing that date; and, if so, why a Vice-Regal Commission was subsequently appointed to inquire into a matter already judged and decided by the Irish Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) On 23rd October, 1907, Sir Arthur Vicars was informed that it had been decided to reconstitute the Office of Arms, and that this would involve his being relieved of the office of Ulster King of Arms. The Vice-Regal Commission was subsequently appointed in consequence of a memorial praying for an inquiry signed by certain Knights of the Order of St. Patrick.

Swine Fever.

SIR W. J. COLLINS, (St. Pancras, W.) To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state the number of outbreaks of swine fever, the number of infected swine and contact swine slaughtered, and the amount paid in compensation in each year from 1890 to 1907.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) It is not possible to separate the numbers of infected and contact swine which have been slaughtered, but the following table will perhaps give my hon. friend the information he desires :

Number of Outbreaks of Swine Fever, Number of Swine slaughtered, and Compensation paid in the years 1890 to 1907.

Year	Outbreaks reported.	Swine attacked.	Compensation.
	Number.	Number.	£
1890 - - -	5,076	29,092	8,329
1891 - - -	5,595	32,349	9,187
1892 - - -	2,748	13,957	5,383
1893 (Jan.—Oct.)	2,377	11,729	4,391
	Outbreaks confirmed.	Swine slaughtered as diseased or exposed to infection.	
1893 (Nov.—Dec.)	536	6,045	34,362*
1894 - - -	5,682	56,296	108,323
1895 - - -	6,305	69,931	120,205
1896 - - -	5,166	79,586	97,914
1897 - - -	2,155	40,432	68,354
1898 - - -	2,514	43,756	77,194
1899 - - -	2,322	30,797	40,198
1900 - - -	1,940	17,933	22,208
1901 - - -	3,140	15,237	20,072
1902 - - -	1,688	8,263	11,341
1903 - - -	1,478	7,933	12,741
1904 - - -	1,196	5,603	6,426
1905 - - -	817	3,876	7,305
1906 - - -	1,280	7,359	13,455
1907 - - -	2,336	11,275	—

* Five months, November 1893 to March 1894.

Note.—The figures relating to outbreaks and number of animals refer to calendar years. The figures relating to compensation paid refer to calendar years in 1890, 1891, 1892, but the financial year ending March following in 1894 and subsequently.

Lay Catholics Educated at Maynooth College.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many lay Catholics have been educated in Maynooth, and how many of such within the last 80 years; when and by whose or what authority were the lay Catholics of Ireland excluded from the benefits of the Maynooth College education, and by what Act of Parliament or other provision were the funds devoted by the original Act to the education of Irish Roman Catholics diverted and applied entirely to such members of that denomination as were intended for the Roman Catholic priesthood alone; what guarantee is it proposed shall be given that any further sum devoted to the better education of the Roman Catholics of Ireland shall not be diverted and applied to the same sole purpose.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Government have no information as to the number of lay Catholics educated in Maynooth. The college was founded in 1795, under an Act of the Irish Parliament, as a place of education for persons professing the Roman Catholic Religion. It appears from the evidence given before the Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland, 1902 (Appendix to Third Report, page 284), that a lay college was founded in 1801, and, owing to the intervention of the Government, was closed in 1817. In the debate on Maynooth College on 18th April, 1845 (*Hansard*, Third Series, vol. 79, page 1032), Sir Robert Peel, speaking on behalf of the Government, indicated that the British Government, and not the Roman Catholics themselves, were responsible for the exclusively clerical character which Maynooth had assumed. I have already informed the hon. and gallant Member that for the details of the Government's proposed measure he must await the introduction of the Bill. The question raised in his concluding inquiry will then be open to full discussion.

The J. W. Leahy Estate Dispute.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the Estates Commissioners forwarded to the new agent of the J. W. Leahy estate at Aghatubrid, in November, 1907, an intimation of the price they were prepared to advance in purchase of the estate and a copy of the agreement entered into between the late owner and the tenants, in which the owner agreed to wipe out all arrears; and, in view of the fact that processes have now been issued for the recovery of arrears due to the 29th September, 1906, being a date precedent to the agreement entered into between the late owner and the tenants, he will now state what steps the Commissioners will take to protect the tenants, who have fulfilled their side of the agreement, from being processed for arrears agreed to be wiped out.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer the hon. Member to my Answer to his Question on this subject on the 25th instant. The Estates Commissioners have now informed the solicitor to the new owner that unless they receive within fourteen days an intimation that he is prepared to continue proceedings for sale at the estimated price the case will be dismissed.

REGISTRATION OF CLUBS (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.) said that in submitting this Bill to the House it would be necessary for him to offer some justification for so doing, but he did not think the views he advanced would meet with any very serious opposition. They unfortunately in Ireland did not come into line with England, Scotland, and Wales when anything in the way of temperance or licensing reform was introduced in that House. There was before the House at the present time a drastic Licensing Bill for England, which was causing a good deal of commotion and criticism, and the people of the North of Ireland—and he spoke with a knowledge of their feelings—very much regretted that they were not included in it. They had made attempts from time to time by individual effort to get legislation passed which would meet the wishes of the people there, and it was well known to every Member of the House how difficult it was to get the Second Reading of a Bill and still more to get it placed on the Statute-book if it were in the hands of a private Member, unless the Government willingly and sympathetically afforded facilities it was almost impossible to do more than get the principle approved. In 1906 he had the good fortune to introduce a Bill which dealt with early closing of public-houses on Saturday, and entire closing on Sunday. Its Second Reading was carried by a large majority, and it was then sent upstairs to a Committee. During the course of its passage through Committee, negotiations were opened up between certain individuals in favour of the measure, and others who favoured the licensed trade, and although he was responsible for the Bill it was passing strange that he was never once communicated with in reference to the proposed compromise. As a matter of fact that compromise, as effected, met with his entire disapproval. He tried both in the House and in Committee to point out that the Irish people had waited long enough for that Bill, and that it was indeed a small thing to ask that licensed houses should close two hours earlier on Saturday nights and entirely on Sundays, in the cities of Ireland. But the Committee upstairs, influenced, and very naturally so, by the Vice-President of the Irish Board of Agriculture, who had had such long experience in this question, was persuaded to agree to the compromise, which he looked upon as a mistake. The principal allegation made against the Bill when it was under discussion was that its passage would involve the creation of bogus clubs.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present. House counted; and, forty Members being found present—

Mr. SLOAN, continuing, said that during the debate on the Second Reading the Member for the College Green Division of Dublin declared that the Bill would lead to the establishment of bogus clubs. The Bill came into force on the 1st January, 1907, and he now had to confess that the contention had proved well founded, and that the effect had been the creation of a number of bogus clubs. Hence the measure he was submitting for their approval that day, and he was bound to say, if he had his choice, he would rather see the working-man in the open public-house than indulging in illicit drinking in a bogus club. The Bill aimed at doing away with that evil, which admittedly was created by the Bill of 1906. He thought the trade, as it was called, would not object to being safeguarded against illicit drinking in clubs. He would be the last in the world to stand up and ask for legislation which would curtail the rights or liberties of the working classes, but he was thoroughly convinced that nothing in the Bill would unduly interfere with the rights of the working classes, nor with their *bona fide* clubs. In Clause 1 of the Bill it was provided that no excisable liquors should be sold for consumption off the premises of a club, and that no visitor to or honorary member of a club should be supplied with excisable liquor on the club premises after licensed houses were closed. He thought the main objection to the Bill would be that it provided for the entry of the police in order to find out whether the club was being carried on according to the law. He did not wish to be the means of creating a new department at Dublin Castle Someone had suggested that instead of a policeman in plain clothes being entrusted with the duty of entering a club after licensed premises were closed for the purpose of finding out whether illicit drinking was going on, there should be a special inspector appointed for the purpose, but it seemed to him that that would mean the creation of an additional department at Dublin Castle. He did not know how they were going to get over the difficulty of inspection, because at the present time if the police got a warrant to visit a club on suspicion they could force an entrance. If any hon. Gentleman could make a better proposal than that contained in the Bill, by which police inspection could be carried out, otherwise than by an ordinary policeman going into a working-men's club, so far as he was personally concerned he would have no objection. The only thing they wanted to do was to make the Bill effective. The application for registration was to be made on the 1st of January. At the present time if a bogus club was raided and brought before the Court its registration might be withdrawn, but all that they had to do in such an event was to change the name of the club and registration could be obtained again. It was intended by the Bill to make impossible in future such an occurrence. They proposed that registration should take place every year on the 1st of January, with notification to those who were interested in the proper working and conduct of these clubs, so that they might make investigation as to whether the application was a *bona-fide* one or not. The fourth clause was very important; it provided that no club should be qualified for registration where the premises were leased by a brewer or a distiller. There would, therefore, be no possibility of subsidising a club by either a brewer or distiller. He did not see how any reasonably sane man could object to the simplicity of the Bill, the object of which was really to curtail what, they admitted, the measure of 1906 had created. Perhaps the Vice-President of the Agricultural Department could tell them about the round table conference which was to have been held last year. There was to be a compromise, and they were to draw up another Bill agreed to by both sides.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) was understood to say that the reason why the round table conference was not held was that the temperance party were so enraged about the compromise that they declined to take any action.

MR. SLOAN said that the temperance party were enraged while the compromise was going on. If the temperance party were enraged because of the compromise, and if that was the reason why the round table conference did not take place, would the hon. Gentleman say how it was that the compromise had taken place, because one argument was as good as the other? The fact of the matter was, they understood that there was a compromise, but that it fell through, not because of the temperance party, but because of the representatives of the trade and of those who joined to assist in bringing the Bill through. Though he ran the risk of being misunderstood, he himself was prepared, rather than reject the whole Bill, to accept what he could get as a reasonable first step towards his object. Much good had already been effected, and it was now a comfort, after ten o'clock on the Saturday night, to walk through the city of Belfast, compared with what it was formerly; and the records of drunkenness on the Monday were now much less. On Sundays, when the people were going to places of worship, the public-houses were closed. Men were turned out of the houses about five o'clock in the afternoon, and the result was that there was now a greater amount of convenience and comfort to the citizens of Belfast in going through the streets. He appealed to the House to look upon the Bill as a non-contentious measure. He did not think that even the ardent temperance reformer could object to it. He understood that the junior Member for the City of London intended to oppose the Bill. If he did he hoped that he would give them some tangible reason in support of his objections, because the reasons which the hon. Baronet gave were sometimes difficult to understand. But in this instance the measure was not complicated, and the hon. Baronet could go through it line for line and letter by letter, and so endeavour to give them some really tangible reason for his support of the rejection of the Bill. He desired respectfully to urge on Irish Members of both parties that the Bill was as much in the interest of *bona-fide* clubs as in the interest of temperance reform, and there was no reason for rejecting it on the Second Reading, because when they got into Committee reasonable amendments would be considered and no doubt accepted if they did not interfere with the purpose of the Bill. With these remarks he begged to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Sloan.*)

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.), who was imperfectly heard, in moving the rejection of the Bill, said that in his view a more absurd measure was never submitted to the House, and instead of being drafted in the interests of temperance reform, it really seemed to be in the interest of the licensed trade. It did not promote temperance in any way. The effect of the Bill would be that a man in his own club would not be able to entertain a friend who resided within seven miles of that place, during prohibited hours on licensed premises. What would be the result in such circumstances? The suggestion would be made that men should become members of clubs, and in that way clubs would be multiplied, and as the multiplication of clubs would be bad in itself, so this Bill which brought about such a result must necessarily be bad. The Clubs Bill of 1904 provided that no constable could enter a club without having previously obtained a search warrant from the magistrate, who should be satisfied that there was reasonable ground for entering the premises. This Bill provided that any police constable could enter a club during prohibited hours for licensed houses in order to see whether the provisions of the Bill were being carried out. He submitted that that was a violation of the rights of clubs which ought not to be tolerated. He was a member of a club numbering 600 or 700 members in Dublin, and what would be thought by Irishmen if a sergeant of police could enter their club at any time from five o'clock in the evening to closing time? It would not be tolerated for a moment; the police, with their privileges and rights, might use their powers for purposes of espionage. It would be a violation of the rights of the subject, against which they were bound strongly to protest. Then as to the extra number and control of the police. The police in Ireland were an Imperial force, and under this Bill they would have an opportunity of prying into private affairs. They were bound to protest against their entering any club except upon reasonable ground, and on a warrant obtained from the magistrate. Let the advocates of temperance promote their cause by means of moral suasion, and not show want of confidence in it by resorting to oppressive and coercive means. Coercive means never succeeded in elevating the individual character. If they adopted the means of moral suasion it would be found that they had a far greater effect than methods of coercion. The club was a man's home where he was supposed to be able to entertain his friends without being interfered with by the police. He moved the rejection of the Bill, and he hoped that the House would join in supporting his Amendment.

Mr. CREAN (Cork, S.E.) rose to speak.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member rise to second the Amendment?

Mr. CREAN said he did. He had opposed every measure of temperance reform since he entered the House, and had given as his reason for doing so the very reason which had been adduced by the mover of the Bill. The hon. Gentleman in charge of the Agricultural Department would remember that he had given strong evidence on behalf of the Corporation of Cork and the trading bodies of Cork in opposition to the Bills, and his main plea was that they simply closed the doors of the public-houses, which were under the supervision of the police force, who could enter into them at all hours of the day or night if they had a suspicion, with warrant or otherwise, while they left open premises which were known to be kept open all night long so long as unfortunate men had money in their pocket. It was a crying and a growing shame, and the evil had become more intense since the last restrictive measure was placed on the licensed victuallers of Ireland. He did not complain of the closing of the houses earlier on Saturday night or Sunday, but he complained of closing them to divert trade into a lot of bogus clubs, created for no other reason than that the public-houses were closed and the public had not what they considered to be legitimate opportunities for taking refreshment. They were the reasons why he had always opposed temperance programmes that came before the House. To-day he was more strongly in favour of this Bill than ever he was opposed to the old Bills that were introduced, and for the selfsame reason that he opposed the old Bills he was a supporter of this. To his own knowledge bogus clubs had been created. He knew men who could not afford to spend money either in public-houses or in clubs who had been brought into clubdom as visitors. The decency of the men themselves would not allow them to accept treats from others without returning the compliment. That was the unfortunate vice of their people, and it should be stamped out if possible. He sincerely hoped the House would accept the Bill. It was no special pleading on his part. His opinion was the stronger on account of the new legislation that had passed through the House all in one direction. He remembered a Catholic bishop, a man of great influence in his own division, speaking to him and for a full hour appealing to him to vote for certain legislation that was introduced by the hon. Gentleman who represented the Agricultural Department, and he told the bishop he could support no such Bill until such restrictions were placed on clubs as would prevent them from being a rendezvous for men who wanted to get drink after the public-houses were closed. Let them be worked on the same principles and under the same conditions that public-houses were worked. He went further than the Bill. He would make them pay a heavy licence if they were going to get the same facilities for sale. He knew clubs to which people went after being discharged from public-houses at closing time and at which they stayed till all hours of the morning if they had enough money. He dreaded the effect of that so long as clubs were left uncontrolled by some authority, he cared not what. He was not speaking of the working man's club any more than of the wealthy man's club. There were scandals in the highest clubs in the land that should be blotted out. He had seen clubs where, when the lights were put out at night, candles were lit and the men went on drinking. If clubs wanted the privileges of vending drink they should be subjected to restrictions to prevent them from doing wrong to the community, and he was there to speak as strongly as he had ever spoken on any subject in support of the Bill.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now' and at end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. White.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. J. P. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) did not rise to give any opposition to the Bill, because from what the hon. Member had said in his speech and from some conversation he had had with him his desire was not to interfere, he took it, with the *bona-fide* clubs of the country. His desire was rather to meet that difficulty. When the Early Closing Bill was going through the House he was courageous enough to make the prediction that the result of an interference with legitimate trade would be the means of establishing all over the country those bogus institutions which those interested in the welfare of the working classes would be delighted to see abolished. In the city he represented there were *bona-fide* clubs, and with reference to them he was quite satisfied with the reasonable Amendments which his hon. friend would accept to safeguard those clubs; therefore he would not interfere with the passing of the Bill. He, however, entered a strong protest against one provision of the Bill—that which gave the right to any policeman to enter on any club premises. It was most objectionable and would be resented by every working man. If they allowed the principle that a policeman could go into a *bona-fide* club it was no stretch of imagination to say that in the near future they would have them coming into private homes to see what amount of liquor people put into their cellars. Such legislation would be repugnant to the feelings of Irishmen generally. There was a safeguard at present. If any person had a feeling that a club was not carried on in a proper manner, all he had to do was to make an affidavit and get a warrant from a police inspector to inspect a club. He was a member of two clubs in Dublin, though he very seldom used them; he found the best club at the fireside at home, and he was more happy there. At the same time, he knew that a large number of working men took advantage of the club system in the city from which he came, not for the mere purpose of drinking, but for reasonable enjoyment. It would be a terrible thing if they put a restriction on that and allowed policemen to enter at any hour, and perhaps take hold of a man who might be sitting in his club, and make him walk the line. It was objectionable, and he did not think the hon. Member for Belfast would attempt to ask that any such thing should be done. He wanted to get rid of the bogus club system. He was happy to say that his prognostications as to bogus clubs had not extended to Dublin. The authorities had been able by proper means to do away with every one of the bogus clubs—bogus in the sense that they were started by individuals for personal gain. He did not believe there were any such clubs in Dublin at present. He was given to understand that in Belfast there were plenty of them. The hon. Member had said that one of the chief benefits of early closing was that one could walk the streets of Belfast after ten o'clock on

Saturday night. But the hon. Member gave away the whole show. The reason was that the people had gone into these bogus clubs which he was anxious to put down. They had closed respectable licensed houses, and opened the door to the bogus club which came under no regulations. There was another point in the Bill which he hoped the hon. Member would see his way to modify, viz., in regard to not being allowed to take intoxicating liquors off the premises. He did not wish it to be thought for a moment that he would like working men to spend their evenings in a club and put half a pint of whisky into their pocket and take it home. But these *bona-fide* well-managed clubs got up Sunday morning excursions, and the members took from the club liquor and sandwiches, and anything else. He did not see why the working-man should be denied the right of going on an excursion, and if he did not wish to buy his spirits overnight, to make the purchase at his club the next morning. If he had to buy it overnight there would probably be none left in the morning, and therefore it would be a great evil to compel him to purchase it overnight. He was thoroughly in sympathy with the point raised in Clause 1, dealing with the brewers and distillers, and preventing them having anything to do with the matter. He had no sympathy with the brewers or distillers who owned tied houses. He was a member of a well-known club in Dublin. and he was sure nobody could say a word against the way in which it was carried on. It would be little short of a scandal if the police were allowed to walk into that club just when they pleased when members might be having a cup of tea or reading the newspapers. He hoped they would be met in their effort to prevent anything like that happening. Personally he was as much opposed to bogus clubs as the introducer of this Bill, and he was willing to support any proposal to kill such clubs which would not interfere with *bona-fide* working-men's clubs. Then there was another clause which would deprive a member of a club from taking his friend to the club during the hours when licensed premises were closed. Surely that would be a great hardship to an Irishman. Under Clause 1 of the Bill a member of a club was prohibited from asking a friend who resided within seven miles of the club to have a drink in the club during the hours that the sale of drink was prohibited on licensed premises. Surely it was going too far to say that a member of a club must not bring in a friend during those hours?

MR. SLOAN: He may bring him in.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI thought it would be very cold comfort to the friend to be brought in and then told he might have a glass of water. It was a fact that in Dublin there was hardly an hotel where a traveller could get his dinner after five o'clock in the afternoon, and that was the result of temperance legislation, because it was found that it did not pay to provide dinners at that hour unless intoxicating liquors were sold. If people were prevented from taking their friends into the clubs during closing hours they would have to take them to their homes, and if he took all the friends he had in Dublin to his own home he was afraid that he would have a lively time of it. Whilst he welcomed heartily the effort made by the Bill to do away with bogus clubs he urged that the points he had raised should be looked into, because they had in the past caused a great deal of confusion and inconvenience in Dublin. He did not, however, intend to vote against the Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he was astonished at the action of the hon. Member for South-East Cork, who, while he seconded the rejection of the Bill, declared that he intended to vote for it.

MR. CREAN explained that what he had done was to second the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

*MR. SPEAKER: I asked the hon. Member if he rose to second the Amendment, and I understood him to say "Yes."

MR. CREAN: What I meant was that I seconded the Bill.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment was the Amendment of Jacob, but the speech was the speech of Esau.

SIR F. BANBURY said he regarded the Bill as a persecuting Bill, and for that reason he was opposed to it. He did not think they would be able to promote temperance by persecution. The hon. Member was proposing that no excisable liquor should be supplied for consumption off the premises. That might be very inconvenient, because the club might have purchased, for example, a large stock of wines or champagnes which it was desirable for commercial reasons to dispose of, and under this proposal they would not be able to do so. Even the Licensing Bill introduced by the Government did not go so far as the hon. Member now proposed. Section (*5*) of Clause 1 provided that no visitor living within seven miles of the town should be supplied with liquor during the closing hours of licensed premises in the district. That appeared to him to presume that all these clubs were bogus clubs. [Cries of "No."] It meant that if he belonged to a club in Ireland he could not take a friend there and give him a brandy and soda during the closing hours of licensed premises in that district. It would be very hard if a member of one of those clubs took a friend there and gave him a drink, and he was haled before a magistrate because the drink had been served five minutes after the prescribed time. There was a provision imposing a seven-mile limit. It was claimed that that was being done in order to make the club a parallel to the public-house, but he did not think that ought to be done. He did not think that distance had anything to do with the matter. A club ought to be a place where men could meet together for friendly conversation, and general harmless amusements. It should be a place where members could bring their friends just as they would do to their own houses. He thought the promoters of the Bill were wrong in attempting to enforce a condition of the kind referred to. Clause 2 provided that—

> "Any district inspector, or head constable, or sergeant of police, may, for the purpose of detecting or preventing the violation of any of the provisions of this Act or of the principle Act, enter the premises of any registered club at any time during the hours when the sale of excisable liquors is prohibited on licensed premises in the district as aforesaid.

That went very much further than the provisions of the Government Bill. He thought this continual inspection of everybody was a very great mistake. Working-men like other members of the community resented being continually dogged to see that they were behaving themselves. If he were in his club with a friend who had just sat down with him he would very much resent being addressed by a policeman—"I see you are here with a friend, he is not a member of the club, and I must ask you whether he has had anything to drink during the last twenty minutes." He thought hon. Members would be inclined to join in objecting to provisions of that sort. He believed that already there was a very great reaction against certain proposals made by hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House, chiefly because of the provisions in relation to clubs. Clause 4 was unnecessary. It was in the following terms:—

> "No club shall be qualified for registration where the premises have been purchased or leased for the purpose of such club by any brewer, firm of brewers, brewery company, distiller, or wine and spirit merchant, or where the club is under covenant to purchase excisable liquors in consideration of money advanced on account of the said club."

There was a provision in the Act of 1904 which seemed to cover everything that was aimed at by this clause. There might be something to be said for the proposal from the point of view that a brewer who was unable to obtain a licence might set up a bogus club and tie it to himself in order to sell his own beer. Clause 6 seemed to him to involve a departure from the old principle of English law that every man was deemed to be innocent until he was proved to be guilty. That principle also applied in Ireland. It was proposed to enact by that clause—

> "Where any registered club sells, or distributes, or supplies, or permits any of its members, servants, or officials, to sell, distribute, or supply, any intoxicating liquors in contravention of Section 1 of this Act, the responsible officers and committee, and every person paying for such intoxicating liquors shall be liable severally on conviction to a penalty not exceeding for the first offence, seven pounds, for the second offence, fifteen pounds, and for every subsequent offence, thirty pounds, unless he proves to the satisfaction of the Court that such liquor was so sold or supplied without his knowledge or against his consent, and, where it is proved that such liquor has been received, delivered, or distributed, within the premises of the club and taken outside the premises, it shall, failing proof to the contrary be deemed to have been so taken for consumption outside the premises."

He was to be deemed guilty unless he proved his innocence. He really did not see why they should suddenly under this Bill reverse what had been an accepted principle of English law for many centuries. It seemed to him that the members, servants, and officials of clubs would have a very great burden cast upon them if they were to be liable to conviction before a magistrate unless they could give the proof which the clause required. He had been asked to give some tangible reasons for opposing the Bill, and he would do so. He thought it wrong to subject clubs to police inspection without a warrant. The police under the Act of 1904 could get a warrant if they were under the impression that anything illegal was going on. Subsection (*a*) of Clause 1 was absurd, because it meant that once liquor was taken into a club it must be consumed on the premises, and subsection (*b*) was an infringement of the liberty of the subject because it would prevent the member of a genuine club from giving harmless refreshment to a friend "during the hours when the sale of excisable liquors is prohibited on licensed premises in the district where the club is situated." He had no objection to Clause 3 which required that all applications for club certificates should be made at a certain given time. That was the only harmless clause in the Bill. He claimed that he had shown that the Bill was unnecessary and unjust, and that it ought not to pass.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) said he had a certain amount of sympathy with the objection to allowing the police to enter club premises in the way proposed. He was well aware that the objection was mainly sentimental, but sometimes sentimental objections were as strong as, if not stronger than, other objections. He gathered from what was said by the mover of the Second Reading of the Bill that he was open to conviction on that matter. As to the rest of the Bill, he had no observations to make. The clauses dealt with matters which the Irish themselves ought to be allowed to settle.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he rose to state the view of the Government in regard to the Bill. They would vote for the Second Reading, but left it entirely to the judgment of the House, reserving to themselves the right to deal in Committee with the particular proposals contained in the measure. As to the question of the sale and consumption of liquor off the premises, he had to say at once that during the whole of the time he had been in the House he had always found the opponents of temperance legislation advising temperance people to attack clubs on the ground that they were the real sources of mischief. They said that temperance people were beating the air in attacking the licensed house while they left untouched the unlicensed club. His hon. friend the Member for South Belfast had taken their advice, and he had introduced a Bill which, though it doubtless had faults, dealt with clubs. He agreed with one of the objections of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, but it was a matter of detail which could be easily rectified. So far as he understood, his hon. friend did not attack the rights of genuine clubs. The hon. Member's desire was to reach the bogus clubs. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill and his supporters had made it quite apparent that they were opposed to all temperance reform. Whether the attack was made on clubs or public-houses it was all the same to them.

MR. PATRICK WHITE said he had never spoken against temperance reform in his life.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that he had heard the hon. Member make a speech an hour and a half long against a temperance Bill.

MR. PATRICK WHITE said that the hon. Gentleman was mistaken.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he accepted, as he was bound to do, the hon. Member's statement and his recollection must have been deceptive. His point, however, was that some hon. Members opposed every attack made in the interest of temperance reform on the licensed trade, unlicensed clubs, or the drink traffic in any shape or form.

MR. CREAN thought the hon. Gentleman was really mistaken.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the hon. Gentleman was opposed to temperance legislation.

MR. CREAN said that he opposed temperance legislation, but supported this Bill.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he knew nothing about other countries, but as regarded Ireland, he knew it was true that just as temperance legislation had progressed, it had been frustrated to a certain extent by the appearance of these clubs; and it was also true to say that with the present law on the Statute-book, it was exceedingly difficult for the magistrates to control clubs. In his own experience he had known more than once when sitting as a licensing magistrate that as soon as a public-house had been closed it was immediately opened as a club. It was not much use doing things like that. He did not understand that there was any desire on the part of any man to hamper legitimate clubs. Certainly it was not his intention or the intention of the hon. Member for South Belfast, but he thought that the members of genuine clubs ought to be prepared to make some little sacrifice of their rights which they did not themselves abuse, in order to remedy what everybody admitted to be one of the greatest evils. As to the matter of police entry, he quite understood the feeling of hon. Members below the gangway opposite. And what was more, to a certain extent he sympathised with them. All he could say in the matter of police entry was that if the Bill secured a Second Reading, as he hoped it would, that clause could not stand as it was. Some method would have to be taken to obviate the apparent difficulties and to satisfy the scruples of members of legitimate clubs who objected to the police, whether in or out of uniform, going into their clubs and doing what they liked. The clause would have to be completely overhauled. Then there was the matter of the sale of liquor to be consumed off the premises. He was a member of two clubs, and he had never been able to understand why a club which paid no licence, and which contributed nothing to the rates, should be enabled to sell intoxicating liquor for consumption off the premises, any more than anybody else. He always paid attention to everything said by the hon. Baronet the senior Member for the City of London, and he thought that the hon. Baronet had made a splendid case with regard to the stock of champagne which the members of a club would not drink– and probably they were right. That champagne the hon. Member said the club could not sell if this Bill passed. He thought a very slight alteration of the clause in the Bill would enable the hon. Member's club to get rid of its bad champagne. But that was not what the promoters of the Bill aimed at. He had never been able to understand the justice of a number of men starting a club and forthwith commencing to sell intoxicating liquor without a licence and with no regulations as to hours or anything else. He maintained that that was a gross injustice to the revenue and also to the legitimate trader who paid for his licence and was subject to all sorts of regulations. The hon. Member for the College Green Division had said that it would be terribly hard for members of a club if they could not get their liquor in the morning when they were leaving for a trip in the country. The hon. Member thought it would be a hardship if they had to purchase their liquor overnight and that they ought to be allowed to purchase it in the morning. Perhaps if it were purchased overnight the liquor would not last so long, although he was not a judge of that. But, as he had already said, members of a club who desired the welfare of the people should be prepared to make a small sacrifice for the general good. He dared say they would get their liquor in the morning even if not at their clubs.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI said that he did not believe in the sale of liquor, etc., *ad lib* off the premises; but if members of a club were going for an excursion to the country it would be a hard thing to be unable to bring with them from the club premises the liquor they wished to consume during their excursion. He agreed it would be an intolerable nuisance if a club were able to sell liquor off the premises to anybody. His argument was that the club members should be entitled to take from the club premises their liquor in the morning they desired to do so.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that at all events, speaking for himself—he only spoke for the Government in favour of the general principle of the Bill—he believed it was not right, and that they ought to oppose—and this applied to every kind of club, bogus or legitimate—the sale of liquor in clubs for consumption off the premises. If clubs wanted to do so they ought to pay for a licence and be subject to regulations. His hon. friend the Member for College Green knew it to be true that within his own city it frequently happened that when the public-houses were closed at a certain hour, a very large number of men who would be much better in their homes adjourned to their club and sat there to all hours under no control whatever.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI: Not in any properly conducted club. They have their hours for closing.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he was not dealing on this point with such clubs.

MR. J. P. NANNETTI said the hon. Member was dealing with bogus clubs.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he differed from his hon. friend. He contended that immeasurable injury was done to poor people who adjourned from the public-houses to clubs, probably with their wages in their pockets, and sat there drinking to all hours and spending their money, while their wives and families were waiting for them at home. He held that the law ought to be strong enough to deal with that matter. He was far from saying that even after they had done their best they could deal with it effectively, but at all events this Bill was an attempt to bring these clubs into some tolerable relation to law, order, and decency. He would suggest to the hon. Baronet that as this was a matter purely affecting Ireland, the Irish people and their own morals and interests, he should allow the Irish Members to fight out their own domestic differences amongst themselves. That was the view the Government took of the matter. They thought that this great evil ought to be dealt with, and so far as the Government were concerned they would support the Second Reading, though not putting any pressure on their followers to do the same. They might do what they liked. But if the Bill went to the Committee upstairs, as it probably would, then they would submit any Amendments to clauses that might be required in order to make the measure effective for the purpose intended, and he believed that it would be supported by ninety out of the 103 Members from Ireland.

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said he rose to support the Bill, although in principle he objected to several of its provisions. The Bill, it was said by its promoters, had been found necessary as the result of the legislation passed in the year 1906, but they had had no statistics which bore out the allegation that as the result of that Bill bogus clubs had become very numerous in Ireland. He hoped before the Bill came to the Committee stage they would be furnished with statistics bearing out that suggestion, and that it would be shown there was some misapprehension on the subject. He had listened with great regret to the hon. Member for South Tyrone when he appealed to the English Members to have regard in considering this measure to the moral sense of the Irish Members, and urged them to leave it to the Government to put down in Committee the Amendments which they deemed necessary. He could only say with sincerity, as one who was anxious that everything that was necessary in this direction should be done, that whatever nominations the Government made on that Committee, he hoped they would not nominate the hon. Member for South Tyrone. For very many years the hon. Member was the advocate of the most extreme form of temperance reform in Ireland. The Bill of 1906 passed the House by an overwhelming majority, and they thought it was a modest measure of reform, but thanks to the intriguing—he could not call it anything else—of the hon. Member for South Tyrone with the representatives of the licensed trade in Ireland and his ignoring the Members who were in charge of the Bill, they had to accept a measure which was hardly worth placing on the Statute-book. He thought there was a general consensus of opinion that as regarded the five cities in Ireland which had not enjoyed the benefits of Sunday closing the time was ripe for giving them Sunday closing, but thanks to the hon. Member for South Tyrone that day was again deferred. He regretted the arrangement made at that time with the licensing trade by the hon. Member.

*MR. SPEAKER: I fail to see how the reminiscences of the discussions on a previous Bill are relevant to this one and bear upon the subject before the House.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare' E.): On the point of order. I ask you respectfully, Sir, on the point of order, whether any hon. Members sitting here will be secured the opportunity of combating the statements which have just been made by the hon. Member, which are quite inaccurate with regard to the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

*MR. SPEAKER: If the statements are out of order the answer to them will be out of order. I think it would be undesirable to pursue the subject.

*Mr. BARRIE, said that as far as he was personally concerned, although he did not accept the Bill altogether, yet inasmuch as it was aimed at bogus clubs and there was no attempt to limit legitimate clubs, he gave it his hearty support. They had heard a great deal that afternoon about inspection of all kinds of clubs. He found it necessary to be a member of more than one club, and he had not yet been connected with any club where the police were likely to feel it necessary to exercise this power of entry. He did not believe the power would be abused by the authorities; it would only be used where there was some suggestion that irregularities were going on. Therefore he thought the fears expressed as to that portion of the Bill need not be seriously considered. As to the other provisions, he was opposed to liquor being sold by clubs for consumption off the premises; that was outside the province of any properly constituted club. As to these provisions he was satisfied, but there were some other provisions which had been dealt with which he thought would require to be modified, if not altogether withdrawn from the Bill. He thought, however, that there was a general consensus of opinion that the Bill with all its drawbacks might fairly go to a Committee.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College) said that when he came down to the House he had no views at all upon the Bill, but having listened very attentively to the arguments which had been put before them he had no hesitation in supporting the measure. The tendency of temperance legislation of recent years had certainly been to give rise to bogus clubs. As public-houses were reduced in number by that temperance legislation, unfortunately in many cases clubs arose in the immediate neighbourhood of the public-houses which had been shut, and as this Bill was a *bona fide* attempt to suppress bogus clubs he could give it his hearty support. He took the view that temperance legislation should be aimed especially at clubs. He, too, like many hon. Members who had spoken, had the privilege of being a member of many clubs, and it was always a subject of wonderment to him why clubs were permitted at all hours of the morning to sell drink freely not only to members but to the friends of members, while the neighbouring public-houses which had to pay heavy licence duties were closed hours before. He could not see why that distinction was permitted by the Legislature, and he thought that temperance reformers should take the line of prohibiting the sale of liquors in clubs at all hours in the morning. For his part he did not see why a respectable club should object to this inspection on the part of the police. He, as a member of, he hoped, respectable clubs, would have no objection whatever to the passage of any representative of the law through the room, but, of course, he thought it advisable when his visits were made that he should be in plain clothes, as the Licensing Bill suggested. He was glad that the Government had given their followers the opportunity of supporting this Bill, and he would have the pleasure of voting for it.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) said he did not like to give a silent vote with regard to this Bill. He had never been in favour of drastic temperance legislation, as he did not believe they could make people sober by Act of Parliament. Temperance was a thing which could be spread by outside opinion just as much as, if not more than, by legislation. But he heartily supported this Bill for the suppression of over-drinking in clubs, and he would make no exemptions whatever in regard to any club whether it was a bogus or so-called respectable club.

They should all, he held, be subject to and obey the same law, and he did not think it was at all fair or just that the publican who had to pay a heavy licence duty, support his wife and family, pay rates, and discharge all the duties of a citizen, should have side by side with his house a club, bogus or otherwise, in which people could get drunk at any hour if they wished. He thought any legislation which would check such a state of things as that was a step in the right direction, and for that reason he supported the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.) said that he also was not in favour of drastic legislation dealing with the temperance question, because he thought that it was very much like the speeches of temperance orators and did not conduce to temperance, but went in the opposite direction. He was in favour of this Bill because he thought it was the only logical Bill that the temperance party had introduced. He was somewhat surprised to hear the speech of the learned Member for South Belfast to the effect that Saturday and Sunday closing was a success, because he had seen people reeling through the streets. He had not seen the city of Belfast turned into the peaceful paradise which had been represented. He listened with some interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Derry, because he understood that he was one of the hon. Members who flung their hats into the air because of the result of the Peckham election.

MR. BARRIE said he was sorry to say that he had an engagement outside the House that afternoon and was not there.

MR. J. DEVLIN said in any case he understood that wherever he had the engagement the hon. Member flung his hat into the air, and rejoiced at his Party swimming into the representation of Peckham upon beer.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. CALDWELL, Lanarkshire, Mid.): The hon. Member must speak to the Bill.

MR. J. DEVLIN said he knew that the Peckham election had nothing to do with temperance, and therefore he would not say any more about it. He did not hesitate to support this Bill as the hon. Member for South Tyrone was prepared to consider and pass such legitimate Amendments as those who were in favour of the Bill as a whole, but yet were opposed to some of its provisions, might approve. He quite agreed that bogus clubs had sprung up in Belfast. Those bogus clubs were the direct effect of drastic temperance legislation. The hon. Member for South Tyrone had stated that when people left the public-houses at five o'clock on a Sunday afternoon they went to these clubs, and that was probably true. He himself believed that the true solution of the temperance question was to be found in the legitimate public-house under proper control and supervision, and proper drink sold in proper hours, with the addition of decent house accommodation for the people. It was not by closing the public-houses that the appetite for drink was destroyed. On the contrary, it was very often increased thereby. When turned out of the public-house people often turned into these clubs to get more drink. He disagreed with one or two of the observations of his hon. friend the Member for the College Green Division. The hon. Member failed to see why members of clubs should not be allowed to buy drink at the clubs to carry with them on excursions. He himself agreed with the Member for South Tyrone that it would be a scandalous thing to allow clubs to become competitors of the legitimate public-houses. Nor did he think there was much point in the argument, because people on an excursion could obtain what they required from the public-houses under the travellers' clause of the Act, and he did not believe there was a thirst so intense that it could not wait for five miles to be satisfied. With regard to the Amendment which the hon. Member for South Tyrone said he was prepared to accept on behalf of the Government, he could only say he should oppose the Bill most strenuously if policemen were to be allowed to go into clubs either in or out of uniform. Personal liberty in Ireland was very slight at the present time, and as the clubs were the homes of the people who used them he objected to officious policemen being allowed to enter them and to behave as the policemen of Ireland did in these matters. Therefore, if the Government desired that the Bill should pass, they should devise some other means of inspection to ensure that the purposes of the Bill might be carried out. Some alteration should also be made in the Bill with regard to the introduction of a friend. The provision of the Bill governing that matter was an absurd one. A member ought to be allowed to introduce a friend and treat him as a temporary member of the club. To say that the friend should only have one drink while the man who took him in could have as many as he wanted was ridiculous. He would not, however, press the point. The hon. Member was the only logical temperate man he had listened to in the House; he had always been a strong opponent of the drink traffic and his object in bringing in the Bill was to ensure that people when they left the public-houses should not go into clubs and secure that which the law would not allow them to have in the legitimate public-houses. He was a strong opponent of grandmotherly legislation on temperance. He himself would not give a licence to a single publican where the public-house was owned by a brewer or distiller. He believed that if the public-houses were owned by the men who occupied them and were not tied to brewers or distillers, half the temperance question would be solved. He objected altogether to the brewer or distiller when a public-house was closed starting a bogus club. He believed that brewers and distillers were at the bottom of the bogus clubs, and he was glad his hon. friend had sufficient grasp of the subject to see that they should not have any control over these clubs and that they should not establish them in opposition to the legitimate public-house. For all these reasons, though he supported the Bill, he hoped in Committee the genuine friends of temperance would alter it in some particulars.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND expressed his pleasure at finding, in respect to this Bill, at any rate, practical unanimity among all who had spoken. The hon. Member who had just spoken and others, who did not always share the views of those interested in temperance legislation, were in favour of the Bill, and it would be found he believed that every man representing an Irish constituency also was in favour of it. That being the case it seemed almost unnecessary to prolong the debate, and he would not have done so by rising but for the fact that the unanimity that prevailed had had an assault made upon it by the hon. Member for North Derry. He quite agreed that the hon. Member was an ardent supporter of temperance but nothing could have been better calculated to injure that cause than the attack the hon. Member had delivered on the hon. Member for South Tyrone.

MR. T. L. CORBETT pointed out that Mr. Speaker ruled that the hon. Member for North Derry was out of order, and his hon. friend was prevented from continuing his argument. Mr. Speaker said he would not allow any reply upon it.

MR. J. DEVLIN said that when the point of order was raised the hon. Member for North Derry was ruled out of order, and when his hon. friend rose to reply he was ruled out of order.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said the matter was rather out of order and must not continue.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said it was perfectly true as his hon. friend had stated, and he was sorry the hon. Member for North Down thought so meanly of him as to suppose that he should take advantage of Mr. Speaker being out of the Chair to do something which he could not do if Mr. Speaker were present. What he was about to say when interrupted by the hon. Member was that the hon. Member for South Tyrone had taken no isolated action at any time. So far as he (Mr. Redmond) knew the hon. Member had acted in consultation with some of those who sat on the Nationalist Benches, and they were prepared to take their share of the responsibility. He would say, however, that it was not in the interest of temperance that attacks of that kind should be made.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: Are we to be allowed to reply to this?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND expressed his inability to account for the restlessness of the hon. Member for North Down, unless it was due to the fact that the hon. Gentleman had recently been speaking at street corners where there was no toleration and no order, good, bad, or indifferent. It was not in the interests of temperance that such attacks should be delivered, in view of the fact that it was more than thirty-five years since the hon. Member for South Tyrone devoted himself to the interests of temperance legislation. He differed from him in a great many things, but there was no gainsaying the fact that he had devoted his life to this thing, and that long before the hon. Member for Derry was heard of in temperance legislation, the interests of temperance legislation in Ireland were served by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. When former legislation was being carried through the House in reference to temperance matters in Ireland, it was constantly alleged, he thought somewhat unfairly, that many of those who were interested in passing Sunday Closing Acts and measures of that kind were animated by some strange desire to injure the interests of their fellow-countrymen who were engaged in the licensing trade, but he thought that that was never true. So far as he knew, no Member had ever been animated in such a way, and there had been no desire whatever unfairly to interfere with the legitimate business of those engaged in the licensing trade. But, be that as it might, he thought the introduction of this Bill showed clearly that the object was not in any way to harass those in the licensing trade, but to promote temperance, and having in view the legislation which had become law, it would be simply an unfair thing to the licensed trade in Ireland if such a Bill had not been produced. He was sorry to admit that where licensed houses had been interfered with and licences extinguished, they had found bogus clubs springing up; that was one of the worst difficulties to be met with, and he did not minimise it for a moment, but that being so,surely this Bill was necessary, in order that the same rules should be applied to clubs as were applied to licensed premises. He thought it would be monstrously unfair to the licensed trade to interfere with their business and at the same time to allow it to be transferred to clubs, which were not under the same public control; therefore he believed this Bill was the necessary consequence of previous legislation in the same direction. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for Belfast, that the Bill would need some amendment in Committee. He thought that in Ireland especially the question of the entry of the police was an extremely difficult one. He was not going to deliver any attack on the police at that moment, but he was afraid that if the Bill passed in its present form, the poor working-men's clubs in the out-of-the-way districts of the city, where men congregated for legitimate amusement, would be far too regularly and far too officiously inspected by the police, and a great deal of irritation would be caused; but there were other clubs in Dublin which he was perfectly certain in which no policeman would dare to show his nose. They could not make it too clear that it was to be in reference to clubs generally; there were to be no exceptions made in favour of the rich man's club. He felt, with regard to legislation about clubs, a good deal of hesitation, because he was assured that, certainly, in Ireland, the law under a measure of this kind would be strained against the poor people, and it would be in many cases practically a dead letter when it came to deal with the wealthy clubs of the leisured classes. Therefore, he quite agreed that the question would have to be very carefully considered in Committee. As to whether the policeman must be in uniform or not, that was a question which he remembered was debated in reference to the Act limiting the speed of motor cars, and there was a question as to whether the policeman who stopped the car should be in uniform or not. He remembered making a remark on that occasion which he thought he might appropriately repeat; and it was that after all it made very little difference whether a policeman was in uniform or not. A policeman was a policeman all the world over. He had had the advantage of being arrested more than once. He had been arrested by a policeman in full uniform and by a plain clothes detective, and in the end the result was exactly the same, and it made no difference to him at all. But there was no doubt that in Ireland, on the question of a policeman marching into working-men's clubs when they were sitting at their tables, perhaps playing a game of cards, if the policeman was not extremely tactful the result would in all probability lead to a worse row than ever took place in any public-house. He congratulated the hon. Member for Belfast and the whole city of Belfast on being united on this Bill, and he specially recognised the appropriateness and fitness of the Government being represented in the matter by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who had done good service to the cause, which was gladly recognised in Ireland in spite of what the hon. Member for Derry had said.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said the hon. Member for East Clare had said that he (Mr. Corbett) had been engaged in speaking at street corners in Peckham. He was only too proud to have spoken at street corners in Peckham, not altogether with bad results. He did not propose to intervene between the House and a division for more than a moment. He was only too glad to give a general support to the Bill, although a few Amendments might be ventured. In Belfast there would, he thought, be no feeling about the entry of police such as that which appeared to be dreaded by the hon. Member for East Clare, and he hoped the Government would not give way on that important point when the Bill went into Committee. He heartily supported the main principles of the Bill, reserving to himself the right to discuss details in Committee.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone E.) said he would not have taken part in the debate except for an observation of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, who, with all the dignity of the Treasury Bench, rebuked him even for cheering his speech and told him that since he was an English Member he had no right to take any part in the debate.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I did not say that. I said it was simply a domestic concern in which nobody else than Irish representatives were involved.

LORD R. CECIL said the hon. Member had intimated that he thought it was undesirable that an English Member should take part in the debate, and he did not in the least agree with that. He thought it was the duty of all Members to consider the Bills that were submitted to them and, if necessary, to give their opinions thereon; therefore, he desired to say a few words on this Bill. He understood that it was introduced in order to put a stop to what were described as bogus clubs, but he did not find anything to confine the Bill, except, perhaps, in Clause 4, which dealt with clubs established by brewers, specifically to bogus clubs more than to any other clubs; it applied to all clubs, however genuine. Moreover, he thought there were some very good observations made by the hon. Members for Clare and for Belfast, which showed the danger of all this kind of legislation. They said that these bogus clubs had come into existence by reason of the drastic temperance legislation already passed. He thought that was the kind of observation which was exceedingly true and important for the House to remember. They did not destroy the disease of excessive drinking by such legislation. At the most they changed the symptoms, and he was by no means sure that if they passed legislation dealing with clubs in general it was the bogus club which would suffer most severely. Bogus clubs which intended to carry on business of a disreputable character in the sale of liquor would be able to protect themselves far more easily than the *bona-fide* clubs. They would take elaborate precautions and have an elaborate system of spies and so on, such as they knew did exist, to protect those institutions, and they would be the last clubs that would be hit by legislation of this kind. It was not the bogus clubs that would most resent the policemen. Where men were assembled merely to drink they would not be disturbed by policemen coming in, but the genuine clubs, which existed for proper social purposes, were the very clubs which would be most hit by the entrance of a policeman. He did not know how it might be in Ireland, but he was asked to go the other day to a working-men's club in his own constituency on this question. It was not a political club in any sense, and he was asked to hear their view on the question. He found profound indignation at the idea of a policeman being allowed to go into that club. They said that the talk about the same law for the rich and the poor was the merest nonsense, which might take in Members of Parliament, but nobody else, and that for a policeman to go into a working-men's club was totally different from a policeman going into a club in Pall Mall.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Why?

Lord R. CECIL said he was sorry the hon. Member knew so little. The club he was speaking of consisted substantially of one fair sized room where the members sat and played billiards and talked, and, he had no doubt, drank their beer. If a policeman went in he went right into that room. There was no other part of the club at all to which he could pay a formal visit, and, as they said, he could go to any member if he thought right, take him by the shoulder, and say, "I think you have had quite enough to drink." They said that it was the end of all privacy and of all social enjoyment, and as to whether the policeman was in plain clothes or in uniform, they scoffed at the distinction. He was surprised and greatly delighted to find that there was still alive in Englishmen such a strong sentiment of personal liberty as he found among the members of that club.

Mr. WATT: What would a policeman do at the Carlton Club?

Lord R. CECIL said he did not think he would go and seize one of the members by the arm and ask whether he had not had enough to drink. Everybody knew that an inspection of such a club as that would be the merest formality. He would go into the hall, and perhaps look into the morning room, taking care to go in when there was nobody there, and then go out again. The thing was totally different, and he observed that the hon. Member for Stoke agreed with him in that, if in nothing else. There was another consideration which he ventured to urge on the House. One of the great difficulties in dealing with the liquor trade was that there had been created a monopoly for the sale of liquor by well-intentioned legislation attempting to put a stop to intemperance. The effect had been to create the monopoly and to raise a difficult question, and it appeared that there was a great danger that the House was going to create the same difficulty in regard to clubs as now existed in regard to licensed houses. They were going to provide strict regulations as to registration and to make it increasingly difficult to obtain registration, and they were going to create a specially privileged class of clubs entitled to registration which would gradually acquire a monopoly value very similar to the monopoly value created in public-houses, and in future years they would have the same difficulty to deal with when they came to deal with registered clubs which they now had in dealing with licensed houses. That was a large subject, and he could not enter upon it more than to indicate the difficulty. But he felt that the Bill was a bad one, and really, if the House dealt with it honestly, they would reject it on the Second Reading; but in view of the great unanimity of those who had the most local acquaintance with the subject he did not propose to put the House to the trouble of a division on it. He could not accept the offer of the hon. Member for South Tyrone to amend the Bill as any satisfaction to himself. He did not feel sure that his Amendment would make the Bill more acceptable to him, and he observed that many of those who supported the Bill did so in the hope and belief that all its main provisions would be struck out. He thought that if that was so, the better course would be to reject it now, and not to leave it to casual Amendments.

Mr. W. E. HARVEY (Derbyshire, N.E.) said he rose to support the Bill, which he thought quite necessary at the present time. He quite agreed with the Member for South Tyrone when he said that they could not touch this question by legislation imposing restrictions without exciting opposition somewhere. The Bill was worthy of the support of all Members of the House who wanted to get rid of a monopoly which was growing in this country to an alarming extent. Clause 4 was the very life of the measure, and in his opinion, knowing the working-men of the country as well as any Member of the House, it would be generally accepted. Many reasons had been assigned for intemperance, and strong statements had been made about bogus clubs, but he ventured to say that the brewers were more responsible for it than any other class of the community. What happened? Many a club owed its origin to a brewery company. There was an inner working in this matter which was not generally recognised, and he ventured to say that if they put a restriction on what he called property in drink they would do a great deal to remedy a great evil. Brewers established clubs in this country, and they paid enormous prices for the premises. The club established, they then forced their drink upon the members, who had no choice as to their drink at all. He wished that the clause could be made to apply to licensed houses as well as to clubs; it would be the salvation of the working-men of the country. He wanted to see the time when they would have no tied clubs or tied houses, and the occupiers of licensed places would be free to buy the best commodities in the open market for the customers who resorted to their houses. He hoped that in the near future something of that kind would be introduced into the House of Commons and accepted, for it would be for the well-being of the community. With regard to the question of the fairness of the Bill to licence holders, he was of opinion that a great injustice had too long been done to the publicans, who were under great restrictions, and were prevented from doing a great many things. Their houses were watched, and it became almost intolerable for them sometimes to continue in their trade. He had yet to learn that one law ought to apply to one trader and not to another; if it was wrong to get drunk in a public-house it was equally wrong to get drunk in a club, and some provision in regard to that aspect of the case ought to be made. Why should a man go into a club which paid no licence and was under no inspection, and get demoralised and intoxicated there, in evasion of the law? A man in such circumstances would be shielded and hidden in the club, and there was no remedy. But in a licensed house, under police inspection, there were effective restrictions. For himself, he could not understand why men should be afraid of policeman going in anywhere. Where they objected to it, the inference was that there was something shady going on which they wanted hidden. He knew well that there were some very disgraceful clubs, and on a Sunday when the public-houses were still closed, he had seen men turn out drunk at half-past ten in the morning. Such a state of matters on a Sunday morning was a disgrace to the nation, and the time had come when they should treat the question in the most serious manner. He, therefore, should give his support to the Second Reading of this Bill, and he was hopeful that ere long the same principle would be applied throughout the whole of England and the rest of the United Kingdom. They wished to put drinking places under proper supervision and proper command.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone had approached the consideration of the question with frequent references to personal liberty, and he had asked the House to believe that the interests of personal liberty were involved in the Bill. He did not know by what process of argument the noble Lord had convinced himself of that, unless it were in pursuance of the old theory that a man's club was his home, and therefore a man was immune from interference of the law if a member and within its walls. But he thought that the position about a club being a man's home was fallacious. To his mind a club in a sense was public, and he could not understand how any man of intelligence could urge for a moment that a man, by paying a subscription as a member of a club, could imagine that he was therefore entitled to place himself outside the law. He supported the Bill from a standpoint perhaps different from that of his hon. friend the Member for South Belfast who introduced it, and of his colleague in the representation of Ulster, who supported it. He did not profess to understand the working of the mind of the Ulster Unionists on the question of temperance reform. They shuddered at the name of drink, and they shrank from the contamination of association with the common publican, but these same Gentlemen in the case of a brewer or distiller prostrated themselves before him. They wanted to apply to Ireland the same law as prevailed in the state of marine, under which, when a man sold drink, they sent him to gaol. But what did they do themselves? Provided a man in Ulster sold enough of it, they sent him to the House of Commons.

An HON. MEMBER: To the House of Lords.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH said it was in England that they sent them to the House of Lords; the Ulster Unionists only sent them to the House of Commons.

He was in favour of the Bill for two reasons. He believed these clubs were a far greater source of intemperance than the legitimate public-houses. He had been driven to that conclusion by his observation of clubs in this country, and he supported the Bill because he was sincerely anxious that the day should never come when the club curse should obtain such a hold upon Ireland as it had obtained upon this country. Secondly, he supported the Bill because he thought the competition of the clubs was unfair to the legitimate licensed trader. He had to pay a high licence duty; he was told the hours at which he was to open and to close; but no such regulations were imposed upon the clubs; they could sell intoxicating drinks at any hour. If the Bill was to be effective it would have to be modified in one way and certainly strengthened in another. He had never been able to understand why it was that neither temperance reformers nor publicans had had the courage to demand that the regulations should be carried to a logical issue and club bars compelled to close at the same hour as public houses. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone might call it an interference with personal liberty, but there was an interference with personal liberty in many things. The law interfered with the burglar, with a man who wanted to take poison and commit suicide, and with the man who wanted to go into a public house and drink after a certain hour; and, inasmuch as the law regulated the sale of drink, if it was improper to sell drink after a certain hour in a public house, the same regulations ought to be made with regard to clubs. He did not think it would be any great hardship for the hon. Member when he entered the Carlton, or when he went up to the club in Marylebone about which he had spoken, to be told it was half-past twelve, and that he could not get drink there. He had too much respect for the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London to imagine that he went round at half-past twelve at night looking for clubs at which he could drink. He sincerely trusted the Bill would be amended in that direction. Unless a clause was put in regulating the hours during which drink could be sold in clubs, the Bill would be non-effective, because inspection after all would be an absolute farce. It was no use for anyone to ask him to believe that the rich man's club would be inspected the same as the poor man's club. The secret of all hostility to legislation with regard to clubs arose from the fact that there would be one law for the rich and another for the poor. If a clause was inserted, such as he had suggested, regulating the hours at which clubs should be allowed to sell drink, then that allegation of class distinction must disappear, and he believed the moral sense of the community—the working-man as well as the middle classes—would demand the enforcement of the law. If they admitted the principle of the regulation of clubs, they must admit the principle of inspection, because otherwise their regulations would not be obeyed. The hon. Member for Clare carried the sympathy of the House with him when he said that it did not matter whether the policeman was in plain clothes or in uniform, the result was all the same. Whilst some precautions and some modifications in the clause might be necessary, he was bound to say that in his judgment, even as it stood, it did not seem to be a penal clause. He did not think the power was likely to be exercised so as to interfere with political action in any club. He had never known politicians sitting up at one o'clock in the morning working out deep political problems. He recognised, however, that some modifications might be necessary in that clause. He hoped the principle would not be abandoned, and that the Bill, instead of being weakened, would come back from the Committee considerably strengthened.

*MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said it was not very often they saw Irishmen above and below the gangway of one mind, but they were of one mind that this Bill would do something to promote temperance in Ireland. He supposed Irishmen were sometimes intemperate. He was sorry to say there was intemperance in Scotland and England, and anything that could be done to decrease it should be welcomed by Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotsmen. The Bill, on the whole, was supposed to be a step forward in the direction of temperance; but the proof of the pudding was in the eating, and the success of the measure would depend upon its administration. It was all very well to say they were working for temperance when they treated people like children. He had felt inclined sometimes to introduce a private Bill providing every hon. Member with a bib and tucker. He was sure the hon. Member for the City of London would have heartily supported such a Bill, knowing its ironical intention. Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotsmen, when they forgot themselves, were going to be treated in the future like babies. They believed in public opinion, and in the long run it was the most potent factor in promoting temperance or any good work. Temperance was more common than it used to be. The sight of a drunken man was once looked on as something amusing, something to laugh at. Now it was altogether different. Now a man who was the worse for liquor in the streets was hurried out of sight by his friends as soon as possible. It was something to be ashamed of. That was a healthy feeling, and it was far more powerful than anything they could do by legislation. They could do far more by influencing public opinion than by any legislation they passed. He thought that the administration of the law should be more severe in regard to the rich man's than the poor man's club. The poor man tried to forget his sorrows and went to the one place where he could have society —something to raise him out of himself. If he took a glass too much who could very severely blame him? The rich man on the contrary had every appliance for amusement. He was a member of a club which he supposed would be called a rich man's club — the Conservative Club of the City of Glasgow. He was not in the slightest degree ashamed of it. If men habitually took too much to drink by all means let an inspector come in, with lace on his cap or without, hold the president and secretary responsible, and see that the club was not abused.

Amendment put, and negatived.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 26; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 57.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Balcarres, Lord
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Valentia, Viscount
White, Patrick (Meath, North)

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Robert Duncan.

NOES.

Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.

Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk Bg'hs)
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Mallet, Charles E.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen'sCo.)
Menzies, Walter
Montagu, E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morpeth, Viscount
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murnaghan, George
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Norton, Captain Cecil William
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Reddy, M.
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seely, Colonel
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Wadsworth, J.
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Sloan and Mr. William Redmond.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (DISQUALIFICATION REMOVAL) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MARNHAM (Surrey, Chertsey) moved the second reading of this Bill, the object of which he explained to be the removal of the present disqualification of electors who, in times of local distress accepted work in the labour yard of a union or in places where able-bodied male paupers might be set to work in a union, the cost of which was provided out of the poor-rate. The fortunes of the ballot in 1906 enabled him to introduce this Bill, but as it happened to be the second Order the House was not able to come to a decision upon it. To-day he found himself in the same position, but having regard to the fact that it was discussed for some time in 1906 in the House he hoped that on this occasion hon. Members would be willing to assent to the principle of the Bill. The objects of the Bill were clearly set forth in the preamble. He thought he might claim that this was not in any sense a party measure, for it had been drafted on the lines of the Medical Relief Act. The Medical Relief Act was passed in 1885 to do away with the disfranchisement of working men who lost their votes if at any time they had received medical relief of any sort. The Bill set out that those men might receive medical or surgical aid without losing their votes. Medical aid under the Bill covered not only the actual physic but also the actual nutriment which was often a great deal more necessary than drugs in time of sickness. In the Unemployed Workmen's Act of 1905 there was a provision that temporary work or other assistance should not disentitle a man to be registered or to vote as a Parliamentary, county, or parochial elector, or as a burgess. He need hardly remind the House how difficult it was at the present moment for a working man to get on the register at all. Under the present registration law it took a period of from eighteen months to two years before a man could get on the list, and many working men were not able to register their votes because they had constantly to move from place to place in search of work. The Bill was not framed in the interests of the "won't-works" and the "ne'er-do-wells," because they passed from place to place and never got on the register at all. Honest poverty, however, was no crime, and yet by our registration law we were punishing men when they were in the very depths of distress by putting them on the same footing as paupers. The Workmen's Unemployed Act only gave relief in great centres of population. In a part of the country in which he took a considerable interest this particular question was brought very forcibly under his notice. In the winter of 1904–5, sixty-four men in a certain Parliamentary Division lost their votes through obtaining temporary work at a labour yard. About twenty-five of them received less than £1 each, twenty less than 10s., ten only 1s. 9d. each, and 5s. 4d. worth of bread. Nobody in the House of Commons would suggest for a moment that honest poverty was a crime. Those who had had any experience of this question knew through what agony those who were driven to ask for employment in those labour yards had gone. Their earnings had gradually disappeared, and everything they could raise a little money upon had gone one by one in order to save their families from utter starvation. At an inquest he knew of a case where a man was reprimanded by the coroner for not applying for relief when his child was dying of hunger. The reason the man gave for not applying was that if he had done so he would have lost his rights of citizenship. Many of those men valued their rights of citizens quite as much as hon. Members of the House. The Bill he had the honour to introduce was a very short one. The first Clause dwelt with the title, and the second preserved the right of voting on all occasions except for guardians. He trusted the Bill would not be treated as a Party measure, but would be supported from all quarters of the House. He begged to move.

*MR. CROYDON MARKS (Cornwall, Launceston) seconded. The Bill might fairly be said to be representative. The working man had a right to sell his labour and the consideration was in money or food. The Bill provided in the case of a municipality or parish, which gave that consideration, the man should be under no disability as regarded his citizenship. Men, through no fault of their own, had to seek help from somebody, and they frequently sought it from the parish who paid for the work done, and yet by receiving that payment the man lost his vote in a small place, while in a large one he was not disfranchised. There was another Act which provided that in an emergency, localities could institute relief works, and in that case such work was no disqualification to the man who then did not lose his right of citizenship. In the case of small village industries, relief works could not be instituted in time to be of service, and those localities by providing work caused a man to lose that which any honourable Member would recognise he would not lose if he was living in a larger place. That principle which operated in a large centre where there were relief works ought to be recognised in smaller places where the local authorities themselves did the work. He could not see any difference between men doing relief work and those engaged breaking stones on the roads, because both were endeavouring by the same kind of work to keep their families out of the workhouse, and they were really saving the parish a larger amount than they were actually receiving. The Bill was a small measure which preserved the man's interest in his country and his citizenship. They should try to encourage village industries, and meet village difficulties, otherwise men would necessarily when thrown out of employment become paupers. The Bill gave localities power to institute local work without having to wait for the machinery of the existing law which dealt only with larger areas. Once a man became a pauper and was struck off the list through having received relief he lost self-respect. The Bill would not encourage loafers or the casual man going from place to place, as such an one did not live long enough anywhere for a voter's qualification. Its object was purely to relieve a difficulty which arose in the case of a workman being thrown suddenly out of employment and who was anxious to save his family from the stigma of the Poor Law. It was with the desire to prevent this evil, lessen pauperism, and quicken the interest of a man in his own country that he wished to second the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Member had argued that he wished to make the law the same in a small place as it was in a large one. There was no law in a large place which allowed a man to receive relief without being disqualified which did not apply equally to a small place.

Mr. CROYDON MARKS said he was referring to the Workmen's Unemployed Act, which was operative in large centres.

Sir F. BANBURY said that, so far as he knew, the Unemployed Workmen Act, to which the hon. Member referred, applied all over the country, and not only to large centres. The introduction of this Bill illustrated the mistake which was sometimes made in the House of Commons of allowing a small measure to pass on the ground that it did not do very much harm while doing some good. As soon as such a Bill was passed, somebody came forward and said that it ought to be extended. Thus the hon. Member who introduced the Bill based his case on the Medical Relief Act. The hon. Member claimed that this was not a Party measure, but they all knew that it was brought in because hon. Gentlemen opposite thought they would gain a little additional support at the elections. ["No, no."] The House should take note that this was an alteration of the franchise. It was absurd that such a Bill should be dealt with when there were not more than twenty Members in the House. The old principle of the Liberal Party was that taxation and representation should go together, but he was sorry to see they had departed from it; in fact, he did not know of any old principle of the Liberal Party from which they had not departed. How on earth could it be said that a man in receipt of Poor Law relief had anything to do with taxation? It was said that poverty was not a crime. Of course it was not, but hon. Members opposite must not claim a monopoly in sympathy for people who met with misfortune. But it required a little courage to show sympathy in the right direction. He took exception to the statement of the hon. Member that everybody prized the franchise. Many people said they had business to attend to, they had nothing to do with politics, and they did not intend to vote; and others would not exercise the franchise for fear that they might be put upon the jury list. If 80 per cent. of the electors went to the poll, it was considered a large number. One of the first results of this Bill would be that one of the deterrents to seeking outdoor relief would disappear. It was human nature to be lazy. He wished that hon. Members, particularly on his side of the House, would be more diligent in the discharge of their duty.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): You are a party of loafers.

Sir F. BANBURY said that was not a polite observation, nor was it correct. But there were plenty of other loafers who should not be supported out of the pockets of the industrious like the hon. Member. A man who was receiving out-door relief would not be prevented from voting at an election. He asked the House to consider a concrete case. A man residing in a village did a certain amount of work in summer, but, being unable to get work in winter, he received relief under the Poor Law. Under this Bill that man would be allowed to vote. Supposing that there was a candidate in the constituency who said he would see that the amount of money given in relief of the poor was increased, and that the work they were asked to perform while in receipt of that relief was reduced, what would be done by the man who was receiving relief? He would support the candidate who appealed to his personal interest, and the consequence would be the creation of a class of voters whose only interest would be in some small matter affecting themselves. Having no stake in the country, they would not care whether it went to pieces. Being kept on money taken out of the pockets of hard working and industrious people, it was absolutely absurd to suppose that they would give an unbiassed vote at the election. That was the worst form of corruption that could be instituted, and human power would be unable to resist the temptation put before those men. It was all very well to say that the Bill was only to apply in the case of men who, owing to unfortunate circumstances, might once or twice be obliged to accept out-door relief, or perform work given by the parish. But it must not be forgotten that, though there were many instances of that sort, there were a great number of people who were continually in the habit of accepting out-door relief. If they were going to make things easier for that class, there would be many more of them. They had only to look back to the state of things which existed in England prior to 1836, when there was a more liberal interpretation of the Poor Law than now, to find that rates ran up to a high figure, and that a very large percentage of the people were in the habit of receiving out-door relief. The Labour Party were clamouring for an extension of the Unemployed Act of two years ago, and for the provision of more money for the administration of that Act. That alone was sure to cause a great increase in the class of men who would come under the Bill, and he was certain that the influence which they would exert would be harmful to the country as a whole. The Bill was one of a very curious description. The Attorney-General would agree with him that an Act of Parliament ought to be clearly expressed, and that it should not afford the Members of the legal profession an opportunity to raise arguments as to what the House of Commons meant when it was passed. A good many cases had arisen out of slipshod legislation, and no one had been benefited except members of the legal profession. He wanted to make quite certain that this Bill would not be subject to any misunderstanding. He understood that the hon. Member who introduced the Bill was in favour of some legislation which would enable any man who, owing to temporary causes, was obliged to accept work from the parish, to retain the franchise. It seemed to him that Clause 2 went very much further than that. It said—

> "(1) Where a person has in any part of the United Kingdom, either himself or by any member of his family, performed work in the labour yard of any union in any such place or places as able-bodied male paupers may be set to work in any union and in consideration thereof has received relief from the guardians of the poor or at the expense of any poor rate, such person shall not by reason thereof be deprived of any right to be registered or to vote either (*a*) as a parliamentary voter; or (*b*) as a voter at any municipal election; or (*c*) as a burgess; or (*d*) as a voter at any election to an office under the provisions of any statute; but nothing in this section shall apply to the election (*a*) of any guardian of the poor; or (*b*) of any member of any parochial board in Scotland; or (*c*) of any other body acting in the distribution of relief to the poor from the poor rate. (2) Every person shall be qualified to be registered as a voter and to vote as aforesaid who would be so qualified f the provisions of this Act had come into force on the fifteenth day of July one thousand nine hundred and seven.'"

He wished to know from the Attorney-General whether it was right to say that, if this clause was passed, any man who was receiving relief for ten or twelve months, or who had even received it for several years on end, would be qualified to vote. If that was so, it practically came to this, that anybody who received relief in any shape or form would be able to exercise the right of voting. That was a very serious thing. The clause was vague and general, and it might be argued by a clever lawyer that anyone working in the yard of a union would be entitled to go out to give his vote. [AN HON. MEMBER: He would not have the qualification.] If the man had only been there for two or three months, it did not follow that he had given up his house. He did not think the clause would prevent that man from voting. Supposing that man was put on the register in July, and that he went out of his house in August, he would be qualified to exercise the vote at an election which took place after the register appeared. The hon. and learned Gentleman should be able to state whether that view was right or wrong. Clause 3 seemed to him an extraordinary clause. He could not understand it at all unless there was going to be a general election. He did not object to general elections, but he did not want Clause 3. His hon. friend behind him said that the Government dare not have one. That might be true, but it would be out of order for him to express his views on that matter at present. He did not wish to be led into the discussion of anything which was not germane to the Bill. Clause 3 said—

> "In the year one thousand nine hundred and eight in England, where the overseers have entered 'objected' against the names of any persons in the list of ownership voters . . . ."

It appeared that the clause only applied to England, but, as a matter of fact the Bill applied to the United Kingdom, which included England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. He presumed that the definition of "United Kingdom" was the same now as it was before the Bill was brought in. Why did not the hon. Member withdraw this Bill and bring in another which would carry out his own intentions? Apparently the hon. Member did not wish to do that. Clause 3 clearly said—

> "Where the overseers have entered 'objected' against the names of any persons in the list of ownership voters or in the old lodger list or have omitted the names of any voters from any list of voters made by them, and such entry or omission has been made on the ground only of those persons having accepted work in the labour yard of a union in such place or places as in this Act are hereinfore mentioned, and such names would not, if this Act had been previously passed, have been so objected to or omitted, the overseers shall make a list of such persons, and such list shall be published, revised, and dealt with in all respects as if it were part of the list of claimants in respect of the occupation of property with the qualifications following," etc.

The result of that was that it would alter not only the franchise but the registration law. At present registration was made in September. The overseers made out the list before 31st July; the revising barristers sat in September; the list was finished at the beginning of October and put up on the church doors and came into operation on the following 1st January. But all that was to be altered, and persons who were not on the register before the beginning of October, but had qualified since the list was made up, were to be put on the register. Why should that distinction and advantage be given to a particular class of people? It seemed to him that in one sense the Bill did not go far enough, for it created a privileged class. There again the hon. Member did not know what his own Bill was going to do. First of all, he was extending it not only to England, but to Wales, Ireland and Scotland. When he did not intend to do that, then he was creating a privileged class. Therefore, he advised the hon. Member to withdraw this Bill and introduce another which would enable the House of Commons to know what the hon. Member really intended. He asked the Attorney-General if he could give a single instance where anything like Clause 3 had ever been inserted in any Bill before. It had nothing to do with a man being poor or anything of that sort. It was said that the clause only meant to rectify an error, but could the Attorney-General give any instance of a rectification of the register having been made in this fashion?

MR. GOULDING (Worcester) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted, and forty Members not being present—

The House was adjourned at Two minutes past Four of the Clock till Monday next.

APPENDIX I.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CLXXXVI.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) House of Lords.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Agricultural Holdings [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 2^a 17th Mar. (342)
*Army Annual	*Earl of Portsmouth*	Read 1^a 26th March (1494)
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1.)	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1^a 26th March (1494)
*County Courts [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 24th March (1178)
Elementary Education (England & Wales) [H.L.]	*Lord Bishop of St. Asaph*	Read 1^a 18th March (494)
Land and Property (Transfer)	*Earl of Wemyss*	Read 1^a 23rd March (995)
Land Values (Scotland)		Second Reading (adjourned) 25th March (1353) Read 2^a 26th March (1494)
Municipal Representation [H.L.]	*Lord Courtney of Penwith*	Committee 16th March (103)
Official Directory of Nurses [H.L.]	*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*	Read 1^a 18th March (495)
Official Secrets [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 16th March (103)
Small Holdings & Allotments [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 2^a 17th March (344)
Sunday Closing (Shops) [H.L.]	*Lord Avebury*	Read 2^a 17th March (326) Committee 26th March (1523)
Thrift & Credit Banks [H.L.]	*Lord Wenlock*	Read 1^a 18th March (494)

(B.) HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Abbotts Bromley Charity	*Mr. Trevelyan*	Read 1° 19th March (798)
*Army Annual	*Mr. Haldane*	Read 1° 19th March (916) Read 2° 23rd March (1176) Committee Report } 25th March (1434) Read 3° passed
Ballot (Transferable Vote)	*Mr. J. D. White*	Read 1° 25th March (1434)
Borough Councils	*Mr. Whitehead*	Read 1° 23rd March (1103)
Breaches of Bye-Laws	*Mr. Wedgwood*	Second Reading (adjourned) 20th March (989)
Buxton Charity	*Mr. Trevelyan*	Read 1° 19th March (797)
Calendar Reform	*Mr. R. Pearce*	Read 1° 16th March (210)
*Children	*Mr. H. Samuel*	Second Reading (adjourned) 24th March (1251)
*Consolidated Fund	*Mr. Asquith*	Read 1° 19th March (916) Read 2° 23rd March (1104) Committee Report } 24th March (1300) Read 3° passed 25th March (1482)
*Costs in Criminal Cases	*Sir W. Evans*	Read 1° 17th March (418)
Crofters Holdings (Scotland)	*Mr. J. C. Wason*	Read 1° 17th March (418)
Cruelty to Animals	*Mr. G. Greenwood*	Read 1° 25th March (1433)
Education (Continuation Schools)	*Mr. Money*	Read 1° 24th March (1284)
Employment of British Subjects Abroad	*Mr. Crooks*	Read 1° 23rd March (1103)
Exportation of Old Horses	*Sir H. Vincent*	Bill Withdrawn 13th March (99)
Hours of Labour	*Mr. Thorne*	Bill Withdrawn 13th March (100)
Hours of Labour (Surfacemen)	*Mr. Summerbell*	Read 1° 17th March (418)
Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland)	*Mr. Hogan*	Read 2° 20th March (920)
Irish National Schools (Heating)	*Captain Craig*	Read 1° 18th March (593)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Licensing Consolidation	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 1° 24th March (1238)
Local Authorities (Admission of the Press)	*Mr. A. Henderson*	Read 2° 16th March (323)
Long Ashton Charity	*Mr. Trevelyan*	Read 1° 19th March (797)
Parliamentary Elections (Disqualification Removal)	*Mr. Marnham*	Read 2° 27th March (1747)
Pharmacy	*Mr. Winfrey*	Read 1° 18th March (594)
Poor Law (Compulsory Contribution Exemption)	*Mr. Lupton*	Read 1° 17th March (418)
Prosecution of Offences (Amendment)	*Sir W. Robson*	Read 2° 24th March (1239)
Public Health	*Mr. Cooper*	Read 1° 24th March (1234)
Public Houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland)	*Mr. Gulland*	Read 1° 23rd March (1103)
Registration of Clubs (Ireland)	*Mr. Sloan*	Read 2° 27th March (1710)
Trusts Investments	*Mr. Banner*	Read 1° 18th March (593)
Unemployed Workmen	*Mr. P. W. Wilson*	Second Reading 13th March (10)
Weekly Rest Day	*Mr. Pirie*	Read 1° 23rd March (1103)

APPENDIX II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1908.

List of Rules, Orders, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[*In Continuation of List given in previous Volume.*]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act, 1907,—Copy of Act of Sederunt regulating the Fees payable in the Sheriff Courts of Scotland, and prescribing the Form of Books of Account to be kept by Sheriff Clerks [7 Edw. VII., c. 51, s. 40]	16 March	36 days
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Sowerby Bridge Urban District (4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	16 March	40 days
Criminal Appeal Rules,—Copy of the Criminal Appeal Rules, 1908 [7 Edw. VII., c. 23, s. 18]	18 March	30 sitting days
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Urban District Council of Donaghadee, and confirmed by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, fixing the Hours for Closing certain Shops within the Urban District [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	27 March	40 days

APPENDIX III.

ESTIMATES FOR CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1908-9

MEMORANDUM BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY.

I.—CIVIL SERVICES.

1. The net total of the Estimates for Civil Services for 1908–9 is 30,496,947*l.* The net total of the original Estimates for 1907–8 was 30,107,034*l.* The increase is therefore 389,913*l.*

2. In the following Abstract and throughout the detailed Estimates comparison is made according to the usual practice, with the total grants made for the service of the year 1907–8 in the Session of 1907. Thus the figures for 1907-8 comprise, in addition to the original Estimates for the year, Supplementary Estimates to the amount of 716,029 which were presented in the summer of 1907. The result (after allowing for the transfer, for purposes of comparison, of the sum of 6,500*l.* to the vote for the Post Office), is a net total for 1907–8 of 30,816,563*l.*; and on this basis of comparison the Civil Service Estimates for 1908–9 show a decrease of 319,616*l.*

3. This decrease mainly arises, as the result of the method of comparison explained above, under the heads of Board of Education, Colonial Services, and Miscellaneous Expenses.

4. The number of Votes is 105, being one more than the original number for 1907–8, an additional Vote appearing in Class III. for the Office of the Public Trustee.

5. Increased provisions has been made for the salaries of Second Division Clerks throughout the Public Service, in pursuance of the Order in Council of the 21st December, 1907, which authorised an improved scale of pay for Clerks of that Division.

CLASS I.

6. The total sum required for Public Works and Buildings is 3,029,468*l.*, being an increase of 160,636*l.* over the amount voted (including a Supplementary Estimate of 5,700*l.* for Houses of Parliament Buildings) in the Session of 1907. Six of the Votes included in this Class show decreases, the amount of which, however, is more than counterbalanced by large increases under some of the remaining heads.

7. The increase of 7,600*l.* for Art and Science Buildings is due chiefly to expenditure on the heating and lighting of the new Victoria and Albert Museum, and on the supply of cases, library fittings, etc. for that Museum.

8. The Estimate for Revenue Buildings shows the large increase of 86,000*l.*, of which about half is attributable to the cost of important Post Office works which were in progress in 1907-8, while 10,200*l.* is for maintenance of Post Offices, about 7,000*l.* is on account of the increased cost of fuel, and 5,900*l.* is for rents of Inland Revenue and Customs Offices.

9. Under the Public Buildings Vote there is an increase of 59,900*l.* The more important new works for which provision is made comprise the official residences of the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Senior Naval Lord, the extension of the National Gallery, additions to the Royal Courts of Justice, and the extension of the Edinburgh Law Courts. Amongst other items contributing to the net increase may be mentioned the annuities under the Public Buildings Expenses Acts, which amount to 8,465*l.* more than in 1907–8; maintenance and repairs (5,060*l.*); increased cost of fuel (4,000*l.*); electric light for the new Public Offices, and general improvements in lighting (3,600*l.*); and furniture and removal expenses in connection with the new Westminister Offices and the Duke of York's School (18,000*l.*). On the other hand the charge for rents, care-takers, etc., is reduced by 9,000*l.*

10. The sum of 2,100*l.* for a memorial of the late Marquess of Salisbury is a re-Vote of the provision made in the Estimates of 1907–8 for this work, the fee in respect of which will not become payable until the year 1908–9.

11. Under Surveys of the United Kingdom there is a net decease of 2,090*l.*, which would have been considerably greater but for the fact that the charge in respect

of the military pay of the Royal Engineer Staff employed upon the Ordnance Survey has been transferred to this Vote from Army Votes.

12. In the Estimate for Harbours under the Board of Trade, which exhibits a net increase of 21,100*l*., provision is made for further instalments of grants in aid of harbours, etc., at Pwllheli, Southwold and Peterhead, and for initial payments on account of similar grants to Craster, Newlyn, Fraserburgh, and Sennen Cove.

13. The Rates Vote shows a continued tendency to rise, the estimated increase (16,300*l*.) for 1908–9 being due, as in past years, in part to the larger amount of Government property in respect of which contributions are made, and in part to additional poundage and increased assessments.

14. Under the head of Public Works and Buildings, Ireland, sums of 7,000*l*. and 4,000*l*. are provided as the first instalments of grants in aid of the Sligo and Fenit Harbours respectively. The Estimate as a whole shows a net increase of 11,430*l*.

CLASS II.

15. The total Estimate under this Class (Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments) is 2,969,166*l*., being an increase of 85,134*l*. on the amount voted (including a Supplementary Grant of 2,200*l*. for the expenses of the Colonial Conference) in the Session of 1907. The increase is accounted for under the following principal heads.

16. The Estimate for the Treasury and Subordinate Departments includes for the first time provision (2,370*l*.) for the composition, under the direction of the Imperial Defence Committee, of Histories of the South African and Russo-Japanese Wars.

17. The Home Office Estimate shows a net increase of 16,232*l*., due mainly to large additions to the Staff for the inspection of Factories and Mines. A sum of 1,000*l*. has also been inserted for the additional office porters, messengers, charwomen, etc., required for the new premises to be occupied by the Department; and the provision for Fees to certifying Surgeons, etc., under the Factory Act (Subhead G.) has been increased by 1,500*l*.

18. The increase of 36,685*l*. under Board of Trade is chiefly accounted for by the large additions which have been made to the Staff of the Commercial Labour and Statistical Department in connection with the Census of Production; the increase from 2,000*l*. to 7,000*l*. of the remuneration of Commercial Correspondents in British Colonies and Possessions; the cost of the reorganisation of the Patent Office which has followed upon the passing of the Patents and Designs Act, 1907; and the formation of a temporary London Traffic Branch (Subhead AA). The charge for the work under the Companies Winding Up Act, 1890, has been transferred to this Vote from the Vote for the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, in accordance with the recommendation contained in the Third Report of the Public Accounts Committee, 1907.

19. The Estimate for the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries shows a net increase of 10,284*l*., due mainly to the cost of additional staff (Commissioners, Inspectors and Clerks) required for the discharge of the duties imposed upon the Board by the Small Holdings Act and other legislation of last Session.

20. Of the net increase of 8,718*l*. under Local Government Board, 5,240*l*. represents the cost of additions to the Audit Staff of the Department which have been temporarily sanctioned pending a permanent settlement of that establishment.

21. The Estimate for the Mint includes 40,000*l*. to meet the loss on light gold coin withdrawn from circulation. This provision is rendered necessary by the approaching exhaustion of the Coinage Fund for the restoration of light gold coin, and the liability to be incurred after the 1st April, 1908, as regards the restoration of light gold coin in Australia. A sum of 5,000*l*. is also provided in respect of loss on worn bronze coin.

22. The increase of 11,971*l*. under Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland, is mainly due, apart from certain additions to staff and improvements of pay, to the automatic growth of the Grants to Schools of Science and Art, etc. (Subhead H.), and to the increase from 9,000*l*. to 10,000*l*. of the Irish share of Swine Fever Grant under the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894.

23. Of the net increase of 6,205*l.* under Local Government Board, Ireland, 3,185*l.* represents a grant payable to the Labourers' Cottages Fund, equivalent to the saving effected by the reduction of the salary of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, under the Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Act, 1907; and the greater part of the remaining increase is for additional staff, to a large extent temporary, for the purposes of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906.

24. Against the foregoing increases may be set the decreases of expenditure shown in the tabular statement, the principal items being 1,587*l.* and 2,900*l.* under House of Lords and House of Commons Offices respectively, due principally in either case to an anticipated increase in the amount of the fees; a decrease of 6,450*l.* under Colonial Office, the total for 1907–8 having included 8,200*l.* for the Colonial Conference; and a decrease of 12,841*l.* under Stationery and Printing.

CLASS III.

25. The total sum required under the head of Law and Justice is 4,031,785*l.*, being a net increase of 109,359*l.* on the total for 1907–8.

26. The Estimate for the Supreme Court of Judicature includes 20,000*l.* for probable expenses under the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907; and an additional sum of 5,000*l.* is provided under Law Charges for expenses of the Director of Public Prosecutions under the same Act.

27. The Estimate for the Land Registry shows a decrease of 1,063*l.*, as the result of further economies in the working of that Department.

28. An Estimate is presented for the first time (Vote No. 5) of the cost for a complete year* of the Office of Public Trustee, constituted under the Act 6 Edward VII., cap. 55, which came into operation on the 1st January, 1908. The salaries and expenses of the Department, as it stands at present, amount to 6,500*l.*; and the fees, which are appropriated in aid of the Vote, are estimated approximately for the year 1908–9 at 4,000*l.* The net sum required is therefore 2,500*l.*

29. The Estimate for Prisons, England and the Colonies, shows a net decrease of 7,260*l.*, attributable to a decline in the number of prisoners to be provided for. Sums of 12,850*l.* and 2,500*l.*, are included for new buildings and alterations at Borstal and Lincoln, respectively, in connection with the Borstal system of dealing with juvenile-adult delinquents.

30. Under Prisons, Scotland, 2,500*l.* has been provided for the purchase of a site for a new State Inebriate Reformatory; and the Estimate for Prisons, Ireland, embodies certain improvements recently sanctioned in the scales of pay of Prison Officers.

31. The Estimate for the Irish Land Commission shows a net increase of 31,928*l.* mainly attributable to additional staff (of which a large part is temporary) necessary under the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, and to an increase by 10,000*l.* of the amount required for the Land Purchase Aid Fund (Sub-Head G.).

32. The net increase of 33,403*l.* under Royal Irish Constabulary is due in part to the addition of 400 men to the Force in the autumn of 1907, and in part to the continued growth of the pension charge (*see* Memorandum prefixed to the Civil Service Estimates for 1907–8).

CLASS IV.

33. The total provision for Education Science and Art is 17,578,230*l.*, being a net decrease of 128,007*l.* on the amount voted (including Supplementary Grants of 200,000*l.* and 11,000*l.*) in 1907.

34. The Estimate for the Board of Education includes a sum of 200,000*l.* for Special Grants to certain necessitous Local Education Authorities (which in 1906–7 and 1907–8 formed the subject of Supplementary Estimates), and a Grant of 20,000*l.* in aid of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. An additional sum of

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* A Supplementary Vote for this service for 1907–8 (part of the year) was taken in February, 1908.

7,200*l.* has also been inserted under Sub-head E. for Grants in respect of Secondary Schools in Wales. After providing for these Grants, the Estimate still shows a net decrease of 199,496*l.*, as compared with the total of 1907–8. This decrease, which arises mainly on the Grants in respect of Public Elementary Schools under Sub-head C., is attributable to a falling-off in the number of Scholars in average attendance at Public Elementary Schools, owing to the tendency of Local Education Authorities to exclude or not admit children under five years of age. The 40,000*l.* under Sub-head C. 6 (Special Grants for the building of new Public Elementary Schools) is a re-Vote of the unexpended portion of the 100,000*l.* granted for this purpose in 1907–8.

35. In the Estimate for the British Museum, a sum of 4,445*l.* has been provided for the introduction of a new system of heating and ventilating the Museum.

36. The Estimate for the National Gallery includes a special grant of 12,500*l.* for the purchase of a portrait by Vandyke of the Marchesa Cattaneo.

37. Under the heads of Universities and Colleges provision is made for a grant of 20,000*l.* in aid of the Building Fund of the University College of North Wales.

38. Under Public Education, Scotland, there is an increase of 15,003*l.*, which includes 10,000*l.*, for Special Grants to certain necessitous School Boards, in continuation of the 11,000*l.* for which Supplementary Estimates were taken in the two previous years.

39. The Estimate for Public Education, Ireland, exhibits a net increase of 22,458*l.*, of which 9,400*l.*, is for instruction in Irish.

Class V.

40. The total sum required under the head of Foreign and Colonial Services is 1,832,612*l.*, being a decrease of 248,793., as compared with the amount voted (including Supplementary Grants for Colonial Services of 282,690*l.*) in the Session of 1907.

41. The Estimate for Colonial Services for 1908–9 shows a decrease of 268,578*l.*, if the above-mentioned large Supplementary Grants of 1907 be taken into acoount. If on the other hand the comparision be made with the original Estimate for 1907–8, the present Estimate shows an increase of 14,112*l.* The Grant in aid of Uganda is increased by 10,000*l.*; and provision is made for expenses under the Anglo-French Convention relating to the New Hebrides to the extent of 28,005*l.*, as against 7,000*l.* in 1907–8.

42. Under Diplomatic end Consular Services there is a net increase of 4,428*l.* The Appropriations in Aid of the Vote include for the first time a contribution of 4,000*l.* from the Zanzibar Government in respect of the expenses of the British Court at Zanzibar.

43. Under Vote 3, the Grant in Aid of the Pacific Cable shows an increase of 13,577*l.*, due to the fact that the estimated available balance in the hands of the Pacific Cable Board, to be applied in reduction of the Grant, is only 6,976*l.* for 1908–9, as against 20,355*l.* for the previous year.

44. A grant of 50,000*l.* is again provided in aid of the revenues of Cyprus, in accordance with the arrangement that provision at this rate should be made for three years from 1907–8 inclusive.

Class VI.

45. In this Class (Non-Effective and Charitable Services) is included a Vote of 109,713*l.* to make good deficiencies on the income accounts of the funds for Savings Banks and Friendly Societies, which, compared with the Vote for the same purpose in 1907–8, shows a decrease of 36,227*l.* Of this decrease, 24,000*l.* is due to provision having been made for thirteen months salaries in 1907–8 in the Savings Bank Department in consequence of an alteration in the period of account. There is an increase of 1,622*l.* under Superannuation and Retired Allowances, and a net decrease on the total for the Class of 34,664*l.*

CLASS VII.

46. This Class (Miscellaneous Services) shows a net decrease of 263,281*l.*, as compared with the total of 1907–8, which includes a grant (non-recurrent) of 33,000*l.* in aid of the purchase of a bridge by the Corporation of Waterford; the 200,000*l.* voted in July, 1907, to meet expenses under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905; and the 14,439*l.* voted at the same time for repayments to the Civil Contingencies Fund. There is also a decrease of 14,000*l.* in the amount required in 1908–9 for Temporary Commissions, several important Commissions having come to an end.

47. An estimate for Repayments to Civil Contingencies Fund will be presented, as usual, later in the Session, if necessary, when the amount to be made good to the Fund has been ascertained.

II.—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

48. The net total of the Estimates for the Revenue Departments is 21,645,631*l.*, being an increase of 1,013,380*l.* over the total for 1907–8.

49. The Estimate for the Customs shows a net increase of 11,800*l.*, of which nearly one-half is due to additions to the Waterguard Staff and the Statistical Office, and the remainder to minor changes and increments of salary.

50. In the case of the Inland Revenue, there is an increase of 54,300*l.*, of which about 30,000*l.* is attributable to the Income Tax legislation of 1907, 8,100*l.* is required for commuted allowances, etc., to Assessors and Collectors of Taxes, and 11,320*l.* is for superannuation.

51. The Estimate for the Post Office shows a net increase of 947,280*l.*, made up as follows:—

Postal Services - - - - - -	721,308*l.*
Packet Services - - - - -	26,000*l.*
Telegraph Services - - - - -	77,199*l.*
Telephone Services - - - - -	122,773*l.*
	947,280*l.*

52. This increase is attributable in about equal shares (a) to normal growth in pay and numbers of Staff, and (b) to the improved salaries, wages and conditions of service, etc., granted under the Parliamentary Committee Revision, taking effect on 1st January, 1908. The additional cost of this Revision in 1908–9 is estimated at about 475,000*l.*; the ultimate cost, on present numbers of staff, will approach 700,000*l.* a year.

53. In accordance with the recommendations made in a preliminary Report of a Committee appointed by the Postmaster-General to consider the various accounts and returns presented to Parliament in connection with the Telegraph and Telephone Services, the Estimates show, for the first time, the anticipated Vote expenditure on Telephone Services separately from that on Telegraph Services. In this connection it is necessary to apportion the Maintenance expenditure under Sub-head P between the two Services, and the Committee have found that the share proper to Telephones is 46 per cent.—see Sub-heads Q and P.P. The share of this expenditure proper to Telephones for 1907–8 may be estimated at 44·3 per cent.

54. An Inter-Departmental Committee has reconsidered the apportionment of expenditure common to Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services, and it is estimated that 20¼ per cent. of the total is proper to Telegraphs and 2¾ per cent. to Telephones. The percentage for 1907–8 was 23 for Telegraphs (including Telephones), of which 2½ is estimated to have been proper to Telephones.

55. Under Packet Services there is an increase of 47,500*l.*—less 11,520*l.*, the increased contribution towards the cost of the service by the Colonies served—mainly in respect of the Contract for the Peninsular and Oriental Service to Asia and Australasia. The provision for this Service in 1907–8 represented, not one year's

subsidy, but the balance due to the Contractors under the retrospective reduction of sudsidy conditional on the extension of the Contract to 1912. On the other hand the provision under Canada and China for the Canadian-Pacific Service covers the period to 6th April only, the date of cessation of the Contract. One-fourth of the cost of this Service is recovered from the Dominion.

56. The increase under Telegraph Services is mainly due to increments in salaries and wages and to the improved scales of pay, etc., resulting from the Revision referred to above.

57. As regards Telephone Services, the increase is due partly to the growth of the system, partly to the additional expenditure resulting from the Revision referred to above, an partly to and increase of 41,369*l.* in respect of Annuities issued in repayment of loans on Telephone Capital Account.

WALTER RUNCIMAN.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall.

2 *March*, 1908.

INDEX

TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[AUTHORISED EDITION].

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

MARCH 13—*MARCH* 27.

EXPLANATION OF ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills: Read First, Second, or Third Time = 1R., 2R., 3R. [*c.*] = Commons. [*l.*] = Lords. *Amendt.* = Amendment. *Os.* = Observations. *Qs.* = Questions. *As.* = Answers. *Com.* = Committee. *Con.* = Consideration. *Rep.* = Report.

Where in the Index * is added with Reading of a Bill, or a Vote in Committee of Supply, it indicates that no Debate took place on that stage of the Bill, or on that Vote.

Subjects discussed in Committee of Supply are entered under their headings, and also under Members' Names, without reference to the actual Vote before the Committee.

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Board of Education—£7,000,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Board of Trade—£100,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
British Museum—£60,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum—£15,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Charity Commission—£15,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Civil Service Commission—£17,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Colonial Office—£25,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Colonial Services—£350,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
County Courts—£2, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Customs—£350,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Cyprus (Grant-in-Aid)—£49,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 142; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings—£40,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 597.
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Foreign Office—£24,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Friendly Societies—£3,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Harbours—£20,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
Home Office—£75,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
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Development Grant—£100,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Dublin Metropolitan Police—£60,000, *Com.* Mar 16*, 213; Rep.* *Mar. 18*, 600.
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum—£4,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Education—£760,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Endowed Schools Commissioners—£400, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Hospital and Charities—£17,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Land Commission—£110,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions—£25,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Local Government Board—£30,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Lord - Lieutenant's Household—£2,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
National Gallery. — £2,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Prisons—£50,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Public Record Office—£2,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Public Works Office—£16,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.
Public Works and Buildings—£95,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
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Reformatory and Industrial Schools—£55,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
Registrar - General's Office—£5,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 599.

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Supreme Court of Judicature, etc.—£43,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Valuation and Boundary Survey—£7,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Land Registry—£16,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Law Charges—£30,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Local Government Board—£85,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
Lunacy Commission—£5,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
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Mercantile Marine Service—£25,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
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Miscellaneous, Charitable and other Allowances—£1,150, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
Miscellaneous Expenses—£4,740, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
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Miscellaneous Legal Expenses—£28,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
National Debt Office—£6,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
National Gallery—£17,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
National Portrait Gallery—£3,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
Osborne—£5,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 597.
Peterhead Harbour—£10,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
Police—£15,000, *Com. Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Post Office—£6,500,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 597.
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Rates on Government Property—£300,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
Reformatory and Industrial schools—£130,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
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Revenue Buildings—£250,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens—£52,000 *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 597.
Royal Palaces—£20,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 597.
Salisbury Memorial—£1,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 211; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 597.
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Education—£850,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
Fishery Board—£7,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Law Charges and Courts of Law—£30,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Local Government Board—£5,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Lunacy Commission—£2,500, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
National Galleries—£3,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
Prisons—£35,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Register House, Edinburgh—£15,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Registrar-General's Office — £1,500, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Secretary's Office — £25,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Secret Service—£40,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 599.
Stationery and Printing—£330,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 598.
Superannuation and Retired Allowances—£300,000, *Com.* Mar. 16,* 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 600.
Supplementary
Board of Education, etc.—£6,000, *Rep.* Mar. 18,* 708.

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  Temporary Commissions—£25,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 214; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
  Treasury and Subordinate Departments—£40,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 212; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 598.
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  Wallace Collection—£3,000, *Com.* Mar. 16*, 213; *Rep.* Mar. 18*, 600.
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